

Third Saturday of Lent

Sculpture focus: Hands

Theme: Blessing

Scripture:

“And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.”
(Mark 10:16)

“For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” (2 Timothy 1: 6)

“And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.” (Luke 24: 50 – 53)

Reflection and Questions to ponder:

As he was blessing them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. Blessing was the final gesture of the departing Jesus. Despite the failures of the disciples, despite the slowness of heart and the breakdowns of hope and courage, Jesus blessed the disciples. Jesus did not leave them alone or unsupported.

Jesus “lifted up his hands and blessed them.” Raising hands was a regular practice of Jewish prayer.

*How might our hands call God’s blessing to be recognized in any given moment?

How did the first disciples, how do we, make sense out of all that happens in this world? It’s all overwhelming. Most of us have moments when we want life to stop spinning. We need time to think, and to take in everything that’s happened.

The first disciples had walked away from their jobs and families to follow Jesus. And he’d turned out to be so much more than they expected, healing the sick, casting out demons, walking on water, teaching God’s truth. But then he was crucified. And then, he was raised back to life! And in being raised back to life, he was then then teaching them what the Scriptures really said about the Messiah.

That is a lot to process and not easily processed. Jesus knew that they would, and we would need, the help and wisdom of God to work through it all, and so Jesus raised his hands to share God’s blessing. Hands that bless, can make all the difference for those during challenge and struggle.

Blessing casts our fear and gives courage. Blessing reminds us that we are not alone. Blessing brings strength and hope for the journey.

Jesus hands were hands that blessed. They were hands that touched people. His hands were hands that worked, hands that brought healing, hands that brought hope. His hands were hands that conveyed love and did not dispense harm.

Imagine for a moment, Jesus' hands. What do they look like? How do they feel?

Imagine Jesus laying his hands on you – on your shoulder or arm or head or touching your cheek. What does that feel like? What message do you receive from his touch?

1. Do you hope for your hands to become more like Jesus's hands?
2. As a follower of Christ, how can you better bless and serve and hold others with your hands?
3. How can your hands bring Christ's blessing and hope for the work of justice in your community and in our world?
4. How might your hands be hands of blessing to help others experience God's radically unconditional love?
5. How might your hands be a blessing that brings others to know and be assured of Christ's presence with them?

Prayer: *Almighty God, help us to remember that you call us to reach out our hands to share your blessing. When we lift our hands to provide care, to do our work as part of the care of others, we are sharing your blessing – we saying to others, “you are important, you are valued.”*

Help us each day to contribute to meeting the needs of others - physically, spiritually, and emotionally. You, oh Lord, have chosen to bless others, and so help us to choose to bless others with our hands in the work we do.

O Holy God, bless my hands that they may continue to be a blessing to others. Amen