

Jesus came and stood among them and said: "Peace be with you."

—John 20:19



THURSDAY, APRIL 6

First came the text messages and loud alerts. Then an announcement from the Emergency Alert System crackled on the radio in the church kitchen: This was not a test. Tornados had been spotted in our area. We were instructed to move to a safe place and take cover.

That day, two hundred members of our parish were gathered for a visioning day. We were looking to the future, praying and working to discern God's dream for our church. Suddenly, we found ourselves packed like sardines in a hallway and classrooms. No one panicked. We kept on working. In those cramped quarters, we could hear lively conversations, new ideas and even laughter. In a fearful moment, we were at peace. Thankfully, it wasn't long before we heard the all-clear, but what about those people who experience disaster, who don't hear the all-clear?

When Jesus meets the disciples in the room where they are hiding after his arrest and crucifixion, they realize that this isn't a test. This is real life. Scary things can and will happen to us and to those we love. But Jesus meets all of us in that tight space of fear and says, "Peace be with you."

Together, in fearful moments, we can draw on our faith and share the deep peace of Christ with each other.

—David C. Killeen