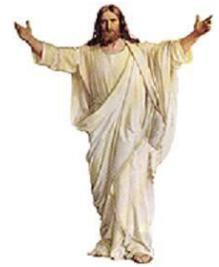


Scripture Study

Third Sunday of Easter – Cycle A



Opening prayer

Acts 2:14,22-33

(Ps 16:1-2,5,7-11)

1 Peter 1:17-21

Luke 24:13-35

Overview of the Gospel:

- Today's gospel takes place on Easter Sunday (as do all the resurrection appearances of Jesus that are dated in the gospels), after the appearance of Jesus to the women at the tomb (Mark 16:1-8; John 20:11-18).
- Two of Jesus' disciples are making their way to a town called Emmaus. One of the disciples who is named, Cleopas, is thought to be the brother of Jesus' foster-father, St. Joseph (John 19:25). Both may have been members of "the 72" sent out on mission by Jesus in Luke 10:1.
- Jesus, who at first conceals his identity from them, finds them disconsolate at having their hopes dashed at recent events. That they misunderstood Jesus' person and mission is evident by their referring to him as merely a "prophet" (verse 19).
- Jesus chides them for being "slow of heart" to understand him and proceeds to lead them through salvation history, showing how his whole life was foreordained by the Old Testament. It isn't until Jesus reveals himself in the Eucharist, however, that they truly know him for who he is.

Questions:

- The 1st Reading is from the first sermon preached by the Church after Pentecost (fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus). What is the main message of the sermon, especially verses 22-33? What can we learn from the confidence with which the Apostles spoke the message?
- According to St. Peter in the 2nd Reading, what makes it possible to place our trust in God (verse 21)?
- In the Gospel Reading, what are the disciples talking about as they walk (see verses 19-24)? What tones of voice do you hear? What hopes are dashed? What plans might they be making? How do they react to the "stranger"?
- What Old Testament passages might the "stranger" have discussed with them in verses 25-27? Why did Jesus do a roundabout Bible study rather than just reveal his identity directly? Why did Jesus act as if he were going further?
- Where is your "road to Emmaus"—the place where Jesus surprised you recently? What happened? Did you urge him to stay? Why or why not?
- How well do you think you can explain the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the way a person can come to know him? Who could you communicate these truths with today?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 572, 601, 640-645, 659, 1166, 1329, 2625

Closing Prayer

Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass reading!

Do not think of the bread and wine as mere bread and wine for they constitute the body and blood of Christ by the Lord's own declaration. For even if your sense experience suggests this to you, let your faith rather confirm it for you. -St. Cyril of Jerusalem

"Did not our hearts burn while he opened to us the scriptures"

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see." And he said to them, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to



them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Meditation: Why was it difficult for the disciples to recognize the risen Lord? Jesus' death scattered his disciples and shattered their hopes and dreams. They had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. They saw the cross as defeat and could not comprehend the empty tomb until the Lord appeared to them and gave them understanding. Jesus chided the disciples on the road to Emmaus

for their *slowness of heart* to believe what the scriptures had said concerning the Messiah. They did not recognize the risen Jesus until he had broken bread with them. Do you recognize the Lord in his word and in the *breaking of the bread*?

St. Augustine of Hippo (5th century) reflects on the dimness of their perception: "They were so disturbed when they saw him hanging on the cross that they forgot his teaching, did not look for his resurrection, and failed to keep his promises in mind" (Sermon 235.1). "Their eyes were obstructed, that they should not recognize him until the breaking of the bread. And thus, in accordance with the state of their minds, which was still ignorant of the truth (that the Christ would die and rise again", their eyes were similarly hindered. It was not that the truth himself was misleading them, but rather that they were themselves unable to perceive the truth." (From *The Harmony of the Gospels*, 3.25.72) How often do we fail to recognize the Lord when he speaks to our hearts and opens his mind to us? The Risen Lord is ever ready to speak his word to us and to give us understanding of his ways. Do you listen attentively to the Word of God and allow his word to change and transform you?

"Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart to recognize your presence with me and to understand the truth of your saving word. Nourish me with your life-giving word and with the bread of life."

