

Peace Be With You

Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19; Ps. 4; 1 Jn. 2: 1-5; Lk. 24: 35-48

The Gospel for the third Sunday of Easter picks up the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus when they had returned to Jerusalem after meeting Jesus and sharing a meal with Him. They told the other disciples of their encounter with Jesus and how they did not recognize Him until He broke the bread at the evening meal and shared it with them.

The other disciples were confused and could not believe their ears. They knew that the body of Jesus was not found in the tomb but they did not know what had happened to it. They could not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead and had appeared to their friends.

Suddenly, as they were discussing this news, Jesus appeared in the room with them. They were terrified at the thought that they were seeing a ghost. But just as He had done with the two disciples that He had met on the road earlier, Jesus did not chastise them for doubting. Instead, He patiently proved to them who He was and that He was real. He proved He was not a ghost because He asked for some food and ate. He showed them that He was the same person that was crucified by allowing them to see His wounds and to touch Him. He opened up to them the Old Testament passages that spoke of His coming into the world and His suffering and death so that they would understand that He had fulfilled everything that had been written. Jesus stopped at nothing to help the disciples believe that He was the risen Lord.

In the past year, we have witnessed and felt personally so much darkness and suffering. Like the disciples, we may have difficulty recognizing the light of the resurrected Christ amidst all the darkness. There are times when we may find ourselves asking: 'Where is the risen Lord?' Like the Psalmist, we may find ourselves at the point of despair praying: '*Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord.*' Come and help me, Jesus!

But Jesus does come to us in many ways, not as He did to the disciples and not in a blaze of glory, but quietly; so quietly that we may not recognize Him. But If we open ourselves up to His presence, we may come to see Him. We recognize Him in the Sacraments of the Church as he speaks to us through the priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We see Him at work in the actions of the priest as he applies the water and holy oils in Baptism and Confirmation. But most of all, like the disciples, we recognize Him in the breaking of the bread during the Holy Eucharist.

The Gospel tells us that Jesus will not condemn us for our doubts. Firstly, He will say to us: '*Peace be with you*' as he did to the disciples. Then He will patiently explain everything in the Scriptures to us through the power of the Holy Spirit; if we let Him.

St. John said: '*We may be sure that we know Him if we obey His commandments...by this we may be sure that we are in Him*'. If we love Jesus and follow His commandments, we will be 'in Him'. We will not have to struggle to recognize Him. We will be in Him and we will be surrounded by Him always.