

3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Reflection

26th April 2020

Today's readings offer us so much to reflect on especially as we continue to celebrate the resurrection of the Lord during this Holy Season of Easter. For our purposes I will attempt to explore these texts which I hope will help us embrace them as a whole.

Let us draw some main components of these readings. In the first reading we hear about the effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit in St Peter. In the Second Reading we hear St Peter exhorting the early Christian community to 'love one another deeply from the heart.' And then in the Gospel we hear about two friends who were seeking to make sense of the events that took place in Jerusalem, the Risen Lord appearing to them and explaining the Scriptures to them, hospitality and the Breaking of the Bread. Simply put, the key components of today's readings are *Holy Spirit, Christian love, Scriptures, Companionship, Teachings, Hospitality and Eucharist.*

It is usually the case that when we purchase a new product we return home with some excitement in order to unpack it and use immediately. The persuasive lure of money often gets the better of us to spend unnecessarily or irrationally as we have seen recently in the bulk buying behaviour of many people during this corona crisis. St Peter stated that *'we were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.'*

See how precious we are to God? Our Heavenly Father looks upon us with delight like that of parents as they hold their new born child. Our heavenly Father delights in us and has given us new life through his Son. This new existence is such that we are now, through Holy Baptism, empowered to be effective agents of the action of God in the world.

Our new life in Christ is living with God. It therefore makes every sense that today's readings are presented in the way they have. As his children, our heavenly Father equips us so that we may be able to live this new life in Christ freely, joyfully and responsibly. From God the Father and the Son we have received the Holy Spirit who make us holy so that we can courageously proclaim Jesus Christ in our world as St Peter did in his time.

How should we proclaim this Good News? The Road to Emmaus as is told in today's Gospel can help us map our path in the new evangelisations. We are called to proclaim nothing other than the truth revealed by Jesus. The Scriptures contain within them the seed of eternal life which is faith. "Faith comes from hearing (Romans 10:17)" and so the one who proclaims this Word needs to be familiar with it and love it. Seeing the two disciples discussing about the events that had just happened to Jesus in Jerusalem reminds us that this proclamation involves others as well. The proclamation of Jesus Christ is part and parcel of the communion of the Church. There is no 'social distancing' when it comes to living our faith. No one is isolated from other members of the Church in his or her life. Our current physical absence from each other, from being at Mass together etc. is a powerful reminder that we are knitted closely with Christ. 'Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ (Rom 8:38-39).'

While discussing the Scriptures with others is important and crucial, the experience of Cleopas and his friend can help us realise that personal interpretation of the Sacred Texts is insufficient for the authentic proclamation of the Good News as mentioned earlier. As disciples, we need to be led to the fullness of the truth and be grounded in it by faith. The Church as our Teacher and Mother leads us into the fullness of the faith. Thus what appeared to be an innocent friendly discussion, turned out to be a catechetical commentary of the Scriptures by the Risen Lord. The Church was commissioned by Our Saviour to continue his work on earth (Mark 16:15). I hope we can see here the irreplaceable role of the teaching office of the Church on

Divine Revelation and on faith and morals. Personal knowledge and experience are both valid points of recognising the action or presence of God in our lives, but they are not the authority by which divine revelation is interpreted and proclaimed. Our personal knowledge and experience needs to be enlightened by the Scriptures and the guiding light of the teachings of the Church so that our proclamation may be truly Christian, Apostolic, Catholic and Prophetic.

What our Lord did to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus is a beautiful image of the Church our Mothers that teaches, guides, articulates and leads the flock in every age. We need the teaching office of the Church (Magisterium) so that our reading of revealed truths will remain united with the unbroken living tradition of the Church from Jesus himself to our day. This listening to the voice of God in the Scriptures and in the Church brings me to echo the words of St Jerome who said, ***“Ignorance of the Scriptures is Ignorance of Christ.”*** To this I add that, ***“Ignorance of the Church is Ignorance of Christ.”***

The contemplative reading of and listening to Sacred Scripture inspires in us the virtue of charity. We see this in the two disciples who insisted that their unexpected companion on the journey share lodging with them that evening. *For us Christians, hospitality is the nectar of the word of God in our hearts.* God readily receives generosity of heart. God delights in the generous giver and rewards it with abundance. Without being calculative our generosity should never be from what we have left over but rather there is great joy in sharing the little we have.

What transpired during that evening meal totally surprised the two disciples. It was when the Risen Lord “took bread, blessed and broke it” that they recognised who it is that had been walking with them and present among them. It was then that they were able to validate and understand what they had both been experiencing in their hearts as they walked on the road. The gift of the Eucharist is the most unexpected gift of the Lord to his Church. It is the Risen Lord himself. The *raison d’être* of Christianity is Christ Jesus himself. You will meet him in the Eucharist where is Presence is Real.

What about you and me? How appreciative am I about the Eucharist? What must I do so that we will always receive the Lord worthily in Holy Communion? Am I courageous to show hospitality to others especially those most in need.

