

Homily for the 3rd Sunday of Easter
[Acts 3:13-15, 17-19](#) [1 Jn 2:1-5a](#) [Lk 24:35-48](#)
“In our Darkest moments, His peace will find us”

Dearly Beloved, welcome to this 3rd Sunday of Easter. This season of Easter offers us the opportunity to reflect on the meaning and implications of Christ rising from the dead; not for days but weeks, if not months. The church takes the opportunity to introduce us to different readings from the different Gospel writers; on their reflections of the resurrection of our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. That is why, even though we are in cycle B, the Gospels are from the different writers and not just from Mark. Today’s Resurrection story is from St. Luke. All the Gospels give different accounts on how Jesus appeared to His disciples after the Resurrection.

Friends, what you should keep in mind is that these stories were familiar to the early church in oral forms, for months or even years before they were written down. Each evangelist, through the workings of the Holy Spirit, picked the events that they wanted to emphasize. So what we are reading today is what St. Luke sees as an important message about Christ and he wishes to share this message with us.

Keep in mind, that Luke is the only writer in the Old and New Testaments of our Sacred Scriptures, who is a non-Jew. He himself was a Gentile and, he was also a disciple of St. Paul. What is interesting, is that unlike the other writers, St. Luke has only one story that talks about Jesus’ encounter with His disciples after the Resurrection, and he chose this particular story.

Beloved, what this means is that we have to approach this passage with that an open mind. Our passage follows the encounter that the two disciples had with Jesus on the way to Emmaus and how they did not recognize Him until He broke the bread in front of them. Of course, that reminded them of the Eucharistic sacrifice that had already become a custom at the time this story was told among all Christians.

Our Gospel tells us that while they were still speaking, Jesus stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be with you.” You should remember, that they were in the upper room with the doors locked as they were fearful of those who arrested Jesus and ultimately crucified Him. Those same people would now be on the hunt for them as well. In this Gospel passage, St. Luke lets us know that Jesus seeks us out, especially when we are troubled; when are struggling with doubts; even about ourselves, and when we struggle with the world which we live in; even in the experiences of our very own painful lives; He is with us through all of these circumstances. When we don’t know what to do, we may feel that perhaps even God has abandoned us, but it is Jesus who comes to us. In this Gospel passage, He just appears in their midst and the first words He says are: “Peace. Peace be with you.”

As they hear Jesus' greeting of peace, the disciples are startled and terrified. They are uncertain about what to make of the figure before them and, quite understandably, they mistake Jesus for a ghost. Yet the figure before them is not a ghost; Jesus invites them to experience His resurrected body with their senses, to look and to touch. The figure before them is flesh and bone, still bearing the marks of His crucifixion. Although the disciples cannot forget His suffering and death, peace begins to take root in their hearts, as their fears turn into joy and amazement. This peace is not the absence of trouble or bewilderment, rather it is a calmness and joy which comes for some, especially when others are sorry or afraid for that particular person or situation.

As further proof of His identity and of His resurrected body, Jesus eats with His disciples. The disciples have known Jesus best through the meals that He has shared with them. By doing this, He unveils for us the significance of the Eucharist. Having shared a meal with His disciples, Jesus now uncovers for them the significance of what was written about Him in the Scriptures. So, too, our celebration of the Mass is an encounter with Jesus, through the Word and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Before He commissioned them, we are told how He opened their minds to understand the scriptures about Himself. I hope you remember that encounter with the two disciples on their way of Emmaus. Luke tells us in vs 31 how their eyes were open through the breaking of bread. These words too, should be your prayer anytime you attend Mass. A prayerful raising up to Christ that He should open up your eyes to see Him in the breaking of bread and open your mind through the readings and the homily. The experiences from seeing Him and understanding Him makes all the difference between different Christians.

As Jesus commissions His disciples to be witnesses to what the Scriptures foretold, our celebration of the Eucharist commissions us, as does the entire Mass, in prompting us to go forward as witnesses. Like the disciples, you too are sent to announce the Good news of Jesus' forgiveness of sins. You are to bear witness to these great realities that Jesus is alive. And because of the new life you have, you do not allow anything in this world to put you down or make your life miserable. Show the world that with love, forgiveness, and a willingness to make sacrifices, etc. we will all live in peace. It is the peace that Jesus offers to all who come to faith in and through Him.