

Third Sunday of Easter – April 30, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-33

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed: "You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you, and listen to my words. You who are Israelites, hear these words. Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. For David says of him:

'I saw the Lord ever before me, with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed. Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted; my flesh, too, will dwell in hope, because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld, nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

"My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day. But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption. God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted at the right hand of God, he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear."

Psalm: Ps 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

R. (11a) Lord, you will show us the path of life.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the LORD, "My LORD are you."
O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence;
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21

Beloved: If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with

perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb. He was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you, who through him believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Suppose you and I are walking along a civilized road and a stranger starts walking with us. “What were you discussing as you walk along?” he asks calmly. We stop. One of us, maybe you, says to him, “Are you the only person in the world ignorant of these last decades and these centuries, the things that have happened in them?” He replies, “What sort of things?” You say, “We had promised to continue Christ’s works—to revere his presence, to preserve his love so it could overflow through us to everyone.” Your eyes shift away. “But now the Church is in fragments, its promises unsuccessful, and there is war, and ... well, ... we have betrayed his mission.” “Betrayed?” the visitor asks. “Ah yes,” you reply. Haven’t you even read about our World Wars? The *entire world at war!* I just read that up to eight million people starve to death each year. That is a quarter of the population!!!! We do what we can, at least I think we do. But are we successful? What’s more, in our cities, Churches are closing. Dioceses are going bankrupt! Only a few are entering the priesthood now. How are we going to have sacraments?” I gesture to you with a “calm down” motion, but you go right on. “We have crucified Christ all over again! Oh, we were hoping that he would make the whole world come right! What are we to do?” The stranger says quietly, “How slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets spoke. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and so bring the world into his glory?” Quiet.

He walks with us more and even comes in to stay with us.

You stutter: “What do you mean, suffer these things? Again? Why would Christ get caught again in the horrors of our world? Syria and North Korea and Iraq and Rwanda and Afghanistan and Indonesia and Libya ... and on and on.” He quiets you. He begins to quote scripture, beginning with Moses and the prophets. His voice is kind. He shows how God is endlessly seeking a love relationship with his people. They enter into it for a while, he says, but then turn their backs and run away. Battles and wars, belief and unbelief, rich versus poor—and worst of all, neglect of the sick, the very ones who have been aching for love. He says that actually there is a way for the human heart to say Yes to God and mean it. “One human being has done it, and can be inside us all, if we let him come. That one is human as well as divine—to the core, both of them—and will not stop trusting God. Not even when trapped in the pool of suffering and death! To the extent that you and others like you join this human being’s faithfulness, the world will be changed.” He walks with us more and even comes in to stay with us. We offer food. He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it, along with the wine. My body, he says. My blood. You are calm now and so am I. You whisper, “Maybe there was a resurrection!” We both nod. We have recognized him. We knew him when he broke the bread. And now we can see him in the breaking bones of the world.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. Can you see how different Peter’s attitude is in this reading than it was during Jesus’ passion and death? To what do you attribute the change? Could such a change take place in you?
2. This Second Reading has been called a sermon on hope. Why do you think that is? Do you find it hopeful?
3. Can you relate to any of the following in the Gospel story?
 - Confusion of the disciples
 - Inability to recognize Jesus
 - Desire to spend more time with a good friend
 - Sudden realization that the Lord is present?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

May your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen