

SPIRITUALITY

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Luke 24:32

R<sup>7</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us;  
make our hearts burn while you speak to us.

R<sup>7</sup>. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** Luke 24:35-48; L47B

The two disciples recounted what had taken  
place on the way,  
and how Jesus was made known to them  
in the breaking of bread.

While they were still speaking about this,  
he stood in their midst and said to them,  
"Peace be with you."

But they were startled and terrified  
and thought that they were seeing a ghost.  
Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled?  
And why do questions arise in your hearts?  
Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I  
myself.

Touch me and see, because a ghost does not  
have flesh and bones  
as you can see I have."

And as he said this,  
he showed them his hands and his feet.  
While they were still incredulous for joy  
and were amazed,  
he asked them, "Have you anything here  
to eat?"

They gave him a piece of baked fish;  
he took it and ate it in front of them.

He said to them,  
"These are my words that I spoke to you  
while I was still with you,  
that everything written about me in the  
law of Moses  
and in the prophets and psalms must be  
fulfilled."

Then he opened their minds to understand  
the Scriptures.

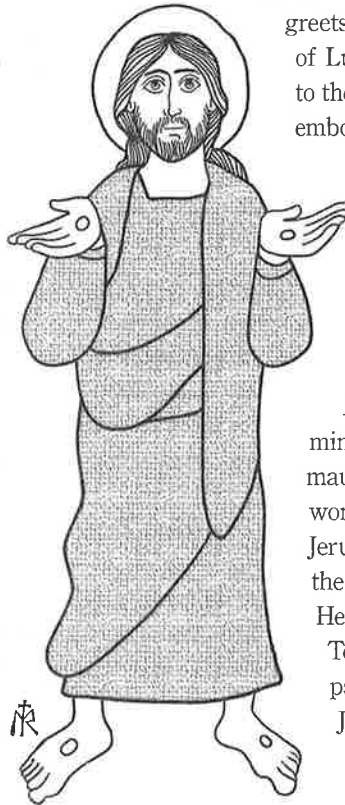
And he said to them,  
"Thus it is written that the Christ would  
suffer  
and rise from the dead on the third day  
and that repentance, for the forgiveness  
of sins,  
would be preached in his name  
to all the nations, beginning from  
Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things."

Reflecting on the Gospel

This Sunday's gospel follows the appearance of the risen Jesus to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. The Emmaus meal was a welcoming event; the meal with the risen Jesus in Jerusalem will be a missioning event. Despite the witness of the two disciples who have hurried back from Emmaus and the news

of Jesus's appearance to Simon, the eleven and their companions are still startled and terrified when Jesus appears among them and greets them with peace. They think he is a ghost! In this gospel of Luke, as in John's narrative last Sunday, Jesus makes clear to them the reality of his glorified human presence, his full embodied existence, by showing them his wounded hands and feet, inviting them to touch him, asking them to give him something to eat, and then taking the piece of grilled fish and eating it before their eyes.



In Luke's Last Supper account, Jesus was among his disciples "as the one who serves" (Luke 22:27; NABRE); now he is among them as one who is to be served. Just seeing with their human eyes is not enough. As Jesus had done in the passion predictions during his ministry, as he had done for the disciples on the way to Emmaus, as the two messengers at the tomb had done for the women on Easter morning, Jesus now opens the eyes of the Jerusalem disciples' hearts so that they may understand the Scriptures. Luke mentions the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures: the teaching of Moses (the Pentateuch/Torah), the Prophets, and the Writings (represented by the psalms). These were the Scriptures that had nourished Jesus throughout his life.

Jesus tells his disciples clearly that they cannot stay in this Jerusalem house of ecstatic joy, listening to his words and serving him at table. This experience must burst through the doors in the service of those outside, people of all nations who are waiting to hear the Good News of repentance and forgiveness of their sins. At the first meal with Jesus that is recorded in Luke's gospel, the great banquet that Levi hosted for Jesus, Jesus spoke of the *metanoia* (Luke 5:32), that life-changing repentance that turns one's life around, and which Levi had just experienced in his call to follow Jesus. At that meal, Jesus had addressed the call to repentance to the tax collectors and sinners; at this last meal after his passion and resurrection "the same message had to be preached to all the nations, beginning with Jerusalem. Jesus's passion-resurrection transformed the table of Jesus the prophet into that of Jesus Christ the Lord and made it the springboard for the church's universal mission. Jesus's message at this point in his final discourse looks directly to the story of the church on mission in the Acts of the Apostles" (Eugene LaVerdiere, *Dining in the Kingdom of God*).

This is what the disciples are to witness. And we, who at the Eucharist also sit at the "transformed table" of Jesus, share in the same urgent mission. As individuals and as church, we must admit our own sinfulness, continually turn to Jesus in repentance, and then go out in the strength of the Eucharist we have received to bear credible, outreaching witness of the need for conversion to the following of Jesus in our own small or larger worlds. Many places in our contemporary world are obviously not founded on repentance and forgiveness, but on war and entrenched animosities that we may publicly lament, or rationalize,

or even excuse, while at the same time still allowing violence and bitterness to inhabit our hearts. If we are to be disciples who take seriously Jesus's Easter greeting of "Peace be with you" and who offer this peace to one another around the eucharistic table with a present and future intent, we need to create a space in our lives and our hearts where such peace with God and with our sisters and brothers can truly be at home.

**Focusing the Gospel**

**Key words and phrases:** "You are witnesses of these things."

**To the point:** Jesus's work is not complete even after he has risen from the dead. At the time of his dying and rising, his disciples had scattered, their faith crushed and their spirits despairing. In Jesus's resurrection, he conquered death in his own being, but his great desire was not to keep this life for himself but to share it with all. And so for forty days, until his ascension, he appeared to his disciples so they might also know the resurrection and their share in it. During this time, he prepares them for their mission to serve as witnesses until "all the nations" have encountered the gospel. In our Easter joy, we are reminded that this mission is now ours.

**Connecting the Gospel**

**to the first reading:** In the first reading Peter takes an opportunity to share the gospel with a crowd that has gathered. They were amazed by his healing of a crippled beggar and in response to their wonder, Peter tells them it is not by his own doing but by "faith in [Jesus's] name" (3:16; NABRE) that the miraculous healing occurred. It is interesting that in this passage Peter echoes the words Jesus speaks in today's gospel when he proclaimed to the disciples, "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer." Although Jesus has risen from the dead and reigns in glory, Peter does not skirt past the vulnerability of Christ suffering and dying on the cross but instead asserts that in this worldly failure, "God has brought to fulfillment / what he had announced beforehand /through the mouths of all the prophets."

**to experience:** In his passion and crucifixion, Jesus redeems both pain and death. As Christians, we will not escape the trials that come to each human life, but we will be accompanied through them by the one who underwent them to the fullest extent. The witness to Jesus's life and glory is not complete without witnessing to his passion and death.

**Connecting the Responsorial Psalm**

**to the readings:** Today's psalm exhorts us to trust in "the Lord who does wonders for his faithful one." In speaking to the gathered crowd, Peter calls upon "[t]he God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, / the God of our fathers." Throughout the generations we see the mighty works of the Lord in our biblical ancestors and hear about them in the stories told in our communities and families about the saints among us. Though the first verse speaks of "distress" and the need for "pity" from God, the next verses express faith that "the Lord will hear me when I call upon him" and names God as the one who puts "gladness in my heart."

**to psalmist preparation:** The holy men and women we look to as models in the life of faith show us how to praise God even in the midst of hardship. How do you attempt to do this in your own life?

**PROMPTS FOR FAITH-SHARING**

Peter rebukes the gathered crowd for Jesus's death, but then acknowledges, "[Y]ou acted out of ignorance." When has ignorance clouded your following of Christ?

The psalmist proclaims, "[T]he Lord does wonders for his faithful one." What wonders have you witnessed in the life of faith?

In the gospel account, the disciples say the risen Lord was made known to them "in the breaking of bread." How do you make meals with friends and family a true time of communion?

Jesus tells the disciples that they are "witnesses" of the good news to be spread to the nations of his life, death, and resurrection. Who are the witnesses in your life who have brought you to deeper faith in Christ?