

3<sup>rd</sup> Easter Sunday, 23 April 2023

Scriptures: Acts...2:14,22-33; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

Homily: Fr. Ken

The Louvre Museum in Paris is one of the most important art museums in the world. Apart from Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa", one of the truly most stunning works of art is Rembrandt van Rijn's 1648 painting titled "The Supper at Emmaus". Rembrandt paints Jesus sitting between two disciples, holding in his hand and blessing a small loaf of bread.

It is a picture of serenity, simplicity, and revelation, as the two disciples suddenly recognize Jesus between them. It is, of course, a painting of the Gospel story from today's Mass.

As this Gospel narration begins, the two disciples are dejected. They are walking away from Jerusalem, away from the site of the Temple, away from the place of God's presence, and, most immediately, the site of the death of Christ.

The two disciples seem to have given up. They are lost souls.

What Jesus does when he joins them, is to re-orientate them. He turns them around, physically, as they end up returning to Jerusalem.

He also turns them around spiritually. As they walk along, initially, Jesus interprets the otherwise familiar ancient scriptures they have known all their lives. But he shows them the meaning, as if for the first time.

"Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" he asks. What is perhaps surprising is the scope of the scriptures to which Jesus refers, not just to Moses and the prophets, but the Psalms as well.

All of these scriptures, besides recording the history of salvation, talk about Christ, or it could be said, Christ talks through them.

One of the most special times for us to hear the scriptures is, of course, within the liturgy of the Mass.

Many of the individual books of the Bible are collections of texts which were first used in a setting of prayer and ritual. It is in the living exchange between God and God's people during the Eucharist, that these words really come to life.

Jesus reveals the fullness of his teaching of the scriptures with his being recognized in the breaking of bread. It is only in this Eucharistic context that the scriptures make sense.

Moreover, this listening to the scriptures and the celebrating of the Eucharist are both brought to life by our living out what is believed. This we find in today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Here we see how the very first Christians actually lived their lives.

What we see is that it is not enough just to read the scriptures, and it is not enough just to celebrate the Mass. We must live the scriptures and live the Mass.

Today, we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. How do we express gratitude and respect for our brother Jesus when we receive him into our hearts?

As revealed to us by the human experience of the early Church, each and every Christian must put their words of faith into actions of love. We are called to live our faith in the real world of daily reality.

And, we are all too familiar with our current world situation. Just recently, Pope Francis acknowledged the limited progress made here and there, and strongly lamented the fact that, in his own words, "abject poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and a lack of even the most basic health care are still rampant and even worsening in

many regions, and everyday afflict hundreds of millions of people”.

Pope Francis noted the ever-increasing gap between rich and poor. He defined hunger and poverty as a direct affront and an offense against human dignity. He noted that one-third of the world’s nations are still at serious risk of not receiving access even to primary education. He decried the lack of resources at the most basic levels of health care and the continued lack of access to even basic health services. He stated: “Our common fight against poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and illness is not merely an act of charity or generosity; rather it is the work of justice, for a better future and a better world for all people.”

Thus, it is worthwhile that we listen, again—for the benefit of our own personal reflection on our own lives—to the narrative of how exactly the very first Christians actually lived their lives.

READ: Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

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