Third Sunday of Easter (B)

Gospel text (*Lk* 24:35-48): 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. 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 Messiah 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.”

“Look at my hands and feet and see that it is I myself”

Fr. Jaume GONZÁLEZ i Padrós
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Today, the Gospel still places us in Easter Sunday, when the two disciples from Emmaus return to Jerusalem and, there, while everyone recounts that the Lord has appeared to them, the same Risen One presents Himself to them. But His presence is disconcerting. On the one hand, it causes fear, to the point that they "thought that they were seeing a ghost" (Lk 24:37) and, on the other hand, his body pierced by the nails and the lance is an eloquent testimony that it is Jesus Himself, the crucified one: “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" (Lk 24:39).

“LORD, let your face shine on us” sings the psalm of today's liturgy. Indeed, Jesus "opened their minds to

understand the Scriptures" (Lk 24:45). It is absolutely urgent. It is necessary that the disciples have a precise and deep understanding of the Scriptures, since, in the words of Saint Jerome, "to ignore the Scriptures is to ignore Christ."

But this understanding of the word of God is not a fact that one can manage privately, or with his congregation of friends and acquaintances. The Lord revealed the meaning of the Scriptures to the Church in that Easter community, presided over by Peter and the other Apostles, who were commissioned by the Master that it "would be preached in his name to all the nations" (Lk 24:47).

To be witnesses, therefore, of the authentic Christ, it is urgent that the disciples learn—first of all—to recognize his Body marked by the passion. Precisely, an ancient author makes the following recommendation: "He who knows that the Paschal lamb has been sacrificed for him must understand that his life begins when Christ has died to save us." Furthermore, the apostle must intelligently understand the Scriptures, read in the light of the Spirit of truth poured out on the Church.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “The Passover is to us a Feast of feasts and a Solemnity of solemnities as far exalted above all others (not only those which are merely human and creep on the ground, but even those which are of Christ Himself, and are celebrated in His honor).” (Saint Gregory of Nazianzus)

- “How can we be witnesses of "all these things"? We can only be witnesses by knowing Christ, and in knowing Christ, also knowing God. It is an existential process, a process of the opening of my ego, of my transformation by the presence and power of Christ.” (Benedict XVI)

- “How? Christ is raised with his own body: ‘See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself’ (Lk 24:39); but he did not return to an earthly life. So, in him, ‘all of them will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear’ (Lateran Council IV), but Christ ‘will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body’ (Phil 3:21), into a ‘spiritual body’ (1 Cor 15:44).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 999)