

Third Sunday of Easter

Gospel text (Lk 24,35-48): The disciples told what had happened on the road and how Jesus made himself known when he broke bread with them. As they went on talking about this, Jesus himself stood in their midst. And he said to them, «Peace to you». In their panic and fright they thought they were seeing a ghost, but he said to them, «Why are you upset and why do such ideas cross your mind? Look at my hands and feet and see that it is I myself. Touch me and see for yourselves that a ghost has no flesh and bones as I have». As he said this, He showed his hands and feet. In their joy they didn't dare believe and were still astonished. So He said to them, «Have you anything to eat?», and they gave him a piece of broiled fish. He took it and ate it before them.

Then Jesus said to them, «Remember the words I spoke to you when I was still with you: ‘Everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled’». Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And He went on, «You see what was written: the Messiah had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead. Then repentance and forgiveness in his name would be proclaimed to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Now you shall be witnesses to this».

«Look at my hands and feet and see that it is I myself»

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Today, the Gospel still refers us to the Resurrection of the Lord, when the two disciples of Emmaus are going to Jerusalem and, once there, while explaining how

the Lord made himself known to them, the Resurrected appears in their midst. But his presence is disconcerting. On the one hand, it provokes a great fright on them, to the point «they thought they were seeing a ghost» (Lk 24:37) but, on the other, his body pierced by the nails and the spear, is an eloquent testimony that he was the very Jesus, the Crucified one: «Look at my hands and feet and see that it is I myself. Touch me and see for yourselves that a ghost has no flesh and bones as I have» (Lk 24:39).

«Lord, show us the light of your face!», sings the psalm of today's liturgy. Yes, for Jesus «then opened their minds to understand the Scriptures» (Lk 24:45). It is quite urgent. It is absolutely necessary the disciples have a clear and profound understanding of the Scriptures, for as St. Jerome tells us, «Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ».

But understanding the word of God is not something we can manage privately, or within a gathering of friends or acquaintances. The Lord revealed the meaning of the Scriptures to the Church gathered in that Paschal community presided over by Peter and the other Apostles, who had been appointed by the Master so that «repentance and forgiveness in his name would be proclaimed to all the nations» (Lk 24:47).

Therefore, to be witnesses to the real Christ it is urgent that—in the first place—the disciples learn how to recognize his Passion scarred Body. An ancient author makes the following recommendation to us: «He, who understands that our Pasch has been sacrificed for him, has also to understand that his life starts when Christ died to redeem us». Furthermore, the apostle has to intelligently understand the Scriptures, read under the light of the Spirit of truth spilled over into the Church.