

III Sunday of Easter (B)

GOSPEL

+ Luke 24, 35-48

Then the disciples from Emmaus told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread.

While Jesus' disciples were talking about what had happened, Jesus appeared and greeted them. They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? Look at my hands and my feet and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have."

After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. The disciples were so glad and amazed that they could not believe it. Jesus then asked them, "Do you have something to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish. He took it and ate it as they watched.

Jesus said to them, "While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Books of the Prophets, and in the Psalms had to happen."

Then he helped them understand the Scriptures. He told them:

The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death. They also say that all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem, you must tell everything that has happened.

Word of God.

HOMILY

04-19-2015

BELIEVING BY OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

It's not easy to believe in the risen Jesus. In the final analysis it's something that can only be captured and understood from the faith that Jesus himself awakens in us. If we never experience «from within» the peace and joy that Jesus sows, it's difficult to find proofs of his resurrection «from the outside».

Luke tells us something about this when he describes the meeting of the risen Jesus with the group of disciples. They're a mixture of everything. Two disciples are telling what they recognized when they ate with him in Emmaus. Peter says that Jesus has appeared to him.

The majority haven't had any such experience yet. They don't know what to think.

At that point «Jesus appears in their midst and says: "Peace be with you"». The most important part of awakening our faith in the risen Jesus is to be able to sense his presence in our midst even today, and to share in our groups, communities, and parishes the peace, joy

and security that comes from knowing he lives, accompanying us closely in these times when nothing comes easy for faith.

Luke's story is very realistic. Jesus' presence doesn't magically transform the disciples. Some are frightened and «believe that they are seeing a ghost». Within others «arise doubts» of all kinds. There are those who «can't believe their eyes out of such joy». Others continue «astounded».

This is what still happens today. Faith in the risen Christ isn't born automatically and firmly in us. It goes about awakening our heart in fragile and humble ways. At the beginning, it's almost just a desire. Ordinarily it grows surrounded by doubts and questions: can so great a truth really be possible?

According to the story, Jesus stays, eats with them and takes time to «open up their understanding» so they can comprehend what has happened. He wants them to be changed into «witnesses», who can speak from their experience, and preach not just any old way, but «in his name».

To believe in the Risen One doesn't happen in a day. It's a process that sometimes can last years. What's important is our inner attitude. Trust always in Jesus. Give him much more room within us and within our Christian communities.

José Antonio Pagola
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HOMILY

04/22/2012

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES

Luke tells us the story of the encounter of the disciples with the Risen Christ as an experience that started something new for them. Jesus' wish is clear. His job had not finished with the Cross. Having been raised by his Father after his execution, he gets in touch with his disciples to start with them a movement that will make them witnesses capable of proclaiming the GOOD NEWS to all peoples: "You are my witnesses."

It was not easy to make witnesses out of those men who had been thrown into total disarray and fear. All through that meeting, the disciples had remained silent and totally passive. The gospel writer simply describes their interior world: they are still afraid, disturbed and incredulous; what they hear still sounds too good to be true.

But Jesus will regenerate their faith. What really matters now is that they don't feel to be alone. They must really feel that the Jesus they are listening to is truly alive. These are the first words they heard him speak: "Peace be with you. Why are you so agitated? And why are these doubts rising in your hearts?"

When we forget the living presence of Jesus in our midst; when we make him invisible because of our own interference and conflicts; when our own sadness gives importance to anything except his peace; when we share with others our own pessimism and

incredulity...we are denying the existence of the Risen Christ. There cannot be a Church without witnesses.

In order to awake their faith, Jesus does not ask them to look at his face, but to see his hands and feet. They have to look at the wounds of the Crucified. They have to always remember that He loved them unto His death. He is not a ghost: "Yes, it is I indeed." He is the same one they had known and followed along the roads of Galilee.

Every time we want to study and explain our faith in the Risen Christ with vague theories and explanations we end up seeing a ghost. To find the real Jesus, we must simply read what the Gospels tell us: look at the hands that blessed the sick and welcomed those children; see those feet that got tired as He walked miles to meet the forgotten men and women; examine those wounds and relive his passion. It is this same Jesus who has now been raised by His Father.

Even though they are still full of doubts and fear, Jesus trusts in his disciples. He is going to send the Spirit to them and he will sustain them. Hence he asks them to continue being his witnesses in the world: "You are witnesses to this."

They should not teach any sublime doctrines, but simply share their experiences with others. They should not preach intricate theories about Christ, but simply reflect his Spirit. They will make Him credible with their own lives, not with their words. This will continue to be the Church's real problem: our lack of witnesses.

José Antonio Pagola
Translator José Antonio Arroyo

HOMILY

04-26-2009

BELIEVING BY OUR OWN EXPERIENCE

(See homily 04-19-2015)

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