

April 18, 2021

Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

1 Jn 2:1-5a

Lk 24:35-48

GROW: In each of our lifetimes, we can look back to a time when we witnessed history. Depending on our generation, it's likely we remember exactly what we were doing the day JFK was assassinated, on 9/11 or, more recently, when our school or workplace shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic. Even these far-reaching events pale in comparison to what the disciples witnessed when the risen Christ appeared to them. Assuring them he was not a ghost, Jesus "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures," and reminded them that they were witnesses to a different kind of history – salvation history: "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." Let us pray that we, too, may have our minds open to the eyewitness accounts in Scripture and our hearts open to repentance, so that "[our] sins may be wiped away."

GO: I'm struck by the disciples' reaction when they realized Jesus really was in the room. They were "incredulous for joy" and "amazed." After this encounter with Jesus, they could not help but share the Good News. Just as the disciples in the early Church testified to Christ's resurrection, today's readings challenge us to share the Good News in a similar way. For many Catholics, this isn't at the top of our skill-set. However, in a 2019 gathering on the New Evangelization, Pope Francis reminds us not to fret over finding the right words. "The joy of the Gospel comes from the encounter with Jesus," he says. "When we meet the Lord, we are inundated by that love of which he alone is capable." This love transforms our whole life, and "the need to announce it arises spontaneously, it becomes irrepressible." The pope's words challenge us first to deepen our relationship with Jesus, then to allow it to transform us, and finally to share Christ's love through our words and actions.

STUDY: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has a short document on its website from St. Paul Street Evangelization titled "Taking the First Step: Keys to Sharing Faith Person-to-Person." Give it a read: uscbb.org.