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Commentary on the Gospel: An Ardent Love for Scripture

Gospel for the 3rd Sunday of Easter (Cycle B), and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 24:35-48*)

The two disciples told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them,

“Peace to you!”

But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. And he said to them,

“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them,

“Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.

Then 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 the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their

minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Commentary

It is the evening of the day of the Resurrection. The disciples from Emmaus, with their hearts enkindled, hurry back to share the extraordinary news of Jesus' Resurrection with the eleven Apostles. When they arrive, the Apostles inform them that Jesus has already appeared to Simon Peter.

During this exchange of unheard-of experiences, the Lord Jesus makes

himself present in their midst. He asks them for a stronger faith, and tells them to look at his hands and feet, and even to touch him. It is really He! They are joyful, but overcome with amazement. It was hard for them to believe that Jesus was really there. Faith is needed to recognize Him in his glorious Body. Jesus even eats a small piece of cooked fish as they look on. In narrating this scene, Saint Luke insists on the physical reality of our Lord's apparition, with flesh and bones (cf. v. 39).

Jesus shows his pierced hands and feet to the Eleven: truly it is He, Jesus Christ, "one and the same," as the Church's Tradition will profess, who was crucified, died, and was buried, and who is now standing before them alive. He has truly risen. His body that remained united to the divinity after the Resurrection, but that was dead, separated from his

human soul, has risen. This great mystery is the foundation of our faith.

Our Lord asks his disciples to believe, and tells them that it is He of whom the Scripture speaks: “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (v. 44). These books of the Hebrew Bible were written as a preparation for the Gospel, and point to the mystery of Christ. We should have an ardent love for Sacred Scripture, both the Old and New Testaments, which is an ardent love for Christ. Let us read and study Sacred Scripture with diligent attention, in order to grow in love and knowledge of the incarnate Word and, in Him, enter into the trinitarian current of Love.

From that time on the disciples will have the mission of being witnesses to Christ, preaching conversion for

the forgiveness of sins to the Jews and all peoples. To do so, Christ promises them the help of the Holy Spirit. The first reading shows us Peter fulfilling for the Jews the mission received from Jesus (cf. *Acts* 3:13-19). In the second reading Saint John urges us to keep the Word of the Lord, to observe his commandments, and thus show our sincere love for God (*1 Jn* 2:5). Our Lady will certainly have given John clear example of this.

Their joy of that Easter night (v. 41) should be present in the life of every Christian, as a mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit. It is a joy that we are called to share with others. Christ ardently wishes to make us sons and daughters of the eternal Father, for He is filled with the Spirit. The joy He gives us, in making us forget about ourselves, is the best proof of our love.

We beseech our Lord in the Liturgy of the Word today: “O Lord, let the light of your countenance shine upon us!” (*Ps* 4:6). This petition is fulfilled in the Resurrection.

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