

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter  
April 26, 2020  
“Personal Truth and Change”

Acts 2:14...33

1 Pet 1:17-21

Lk 24:13-35

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

As we grow older, most of us get pretty well set in our behaviors and ways of thinking. We have found a way of believing and living that seems to work for us. Consequently, we resist anyone or anything that threatens what has become second nature to ourselves.

Even if we are wrong, we still resist any modification or change, because that entails work – usually hard work. Thus, we deny our part in a failing relationship – our part in the deteriorating environment or in climate change – the obvious fact that we are overweight and should do something about it – that we have an addiction to alcohol, tobacco, gambling, or anything else. In every case, we deny the facts, we make excuses, and we refuse to look at the underlying causes of our problem.

However, then, if we are lucky, something happens which shakes us up! There is some accident, some trauma, some event that turns our personal world upside down – and we can see, admit, and accept what we never could before! This is what happened to the disciples of Jesus and to the broader Jewish community after the Resurrection of Jesus.

Everyone thought that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who would restore Israel to its former glory. They would be delivered from their oppressors – and there would be a good life for everyone! But they misunderstood both the salvation and the kingdom that Jesus really came to establish!

The two disciples on their way to Emmaus completely missed who Jesus was and what he came to do. We could say that they had given up their discipleship and were going back to whatever they did before they met Jesus three years beforehand. They had even discounted what the women discovered earlier, on that first Easter morning!

Fortunately, for everyone, Jesus did not give up on them. He appeared to them

as a very enlightened and knowledgeable fellow traveler. And when they extended hospitality that evening to the stranger, God revealed who it was that was breaking bread with them!

At that moment, they saw the truth about many things – especially about themselves – And their lives were changed forever. They rushed back the 7 miles to Jerusalem. They shared with the other disciples the earth-shaking truth that was revealed to them!

St. Peter tells us today in the first reading, that when God raised up Jesus, He exalted him at His right hand. He also gave Jesus the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon the whole world! Moreover, if we are open to that Spirit, it can change us in both subtle and dramatic ways. But we must be open!

In that same first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Peter was speaking to the assembled crowd that had gathered outside the Upper Room on the first Pentecost Sunday. Peter didn't pull any punches. He let the people know that they had been at fault – they had failed terribly. They had rejected Jesus and his teaching, because he was not the Messiah they had hoped for and wanted. They had conspired in his condemnation and crucifixion!

The way of Jesus was something new – It was far too hard – It demanded personal sacrifice. It required that they admit the truth about themselves – that they repent – and that they change! It was a hard line, but it was the truth. And the truth would set them free, if they would become authentic followers of the New Way of Jesus and his Gospel!

Brothers and Sisters, St. Peter also has hopeful and comforting words for us in the second reading. God knows the truth about ourselves. God knows our blind spots, our denials, and our lame excuses. God knows our failures and our sins. But God is a loving Father. If we turn to God – If we conduct ourselves with a new reverence during our sojourn here on earth – If we realize that Jesus has ransomed us from our sinful ways and useless endeavors – Then we can be liberated and changed!

We can't do this ourselves. Everything depends upon God's gift of grace. But His grace is infinitely abundant, and can work miracles in our lives and hearts if we are receptive!

So, let us pray for this grace. May we see the truth of ourselves and our lives. And may we always be faithful disciples of Jesus from this day forward!

Amen.

April 26, 2020

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