

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME TODAY, YESTERDAY AND
FOREVER

April 22/23, 2023

Jesus kept telling the Jews that He was in existence before Abraham. The prophets also talked a lot about Him. It was difficult for the Jews to believe what He said. But today, St. Peter explains to the Jews again what Jesus had been telling them, that David as a prophet, wrote about Him. Before then, they thought David was talking about himself. Jesus before He ascended into heaven told His disciples: "I am with you always, to the end of time" (Mt.28:20).

In the gospel, Jesus was explaining to Cleopas and his friend on their way to Emmaus, what the scriptures said about Him. He told them that all the prophets prophesied about Him. Even though they felt something within them as He talked to them, they did not recognize Him until the breaking of bread.

St. Peter testified that Jesus was raised from the dead and He is alive. The two disciples also went back to Jerusalem to announce that they had seen Jesus. And they were told that He had appeared to Simon too. Thus, the prophets, the scriptures and the disciples all bear witness that Christ was there yesterday, and He is the same today and will be forever. This is what St. Peter wrote to the early Christians everywhere: "He (Jesus) was known before the foundation of the world but revealed in the final time for you".

The problem of many Christians is how to accept and believe that Jesus is with us now as He was with the early believers even though He is present to us in his Word and Sacrament – the Eucharist. This is the way He has been with His disciples from the time He ascended into heaven till today.

Every day, the scriptures are read to us, and we break bread together. We relive what has taken place before. Do the readings of the Word and the breaking of bread make me experience the presence of Jesus at that moment? Do I understand that the message is about Jesus and at the same time He is the One speaking to me?

Cleopas and the other disciple recognized Christ in the breaking of bread, and they were excited; what about participating in the Eucharist, do I see Jesus? Do I experience anything in my heart? Does the celebration of the Eucharist bring me closer to Jesus every day?

Unfortunately, our belief in the scriptures is diminishing and it has affected our belief in the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist and in the world. Many people in the world and even among Christians, feel that the Bible should be rewritten for the modern world. In some versions written of late there is some evidence that what was written at first is not good for us today. But we forget that when we water down the scriptures, we push Jesus away from our lives.

Since we are not able to encounter Jesus in our celebrations, especially, in the Mass, we are not able to experience Him in our lives and it becomes difficult for us to bear witness to Him. What the apostles and the early believers did is what we are to follow, that is, to bear witness to the risen Lord. One of the things Jesus expects from you and me is to bear witness; to let people know who He is and what He can do in our lives. That was what He commanded the apostles to do: "Go, make disciples of all nations...and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you" (Mt.28:19), and it is for you and me to do exactly that. Many of us have failed to do that.

Can we ask Jesus to stay with us as Cleopas and his friend pressed Jesus to stay with them? Is there any room for Him in my heart?

Do I recognize Jesus accompanying me in my journey here on earth? What impact do His Word and the Eucharist have on me? Do I consider the two elements as my spiritual nourishments without which I will never grow in the Spirit?