

15th April 2018 (3rd Sunday of Easter, Year B)

Acts 3:13-15,17-19; Psalm 4:2,4,7,9; 1 John 2:1-5; Luke 24:35-48.

Peace be with you!

On the evening of the day of the resurrection, the disciples of Jesus were gathered, perhaps for the evening meal, discussing the events of the day. Some among them had encountered Jesus, but they did not know how to deal with this information. We might need to include ourselves in this picture; we have once again celebrated the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, but do we really know what this means for us?

Even though the disciples deserted him at the most difficult moment of his life, even though they misunderstood him and failed to recognise him, Jesus does not abandon his disciples or us. Once again Jesus appears among his disciples and gives them his peace! This is good news for us; Jesus, God, never abandons us even when we desert him and turn away from him! Jesus comes in even when we close the doors of faith out of fear of being ridiculed by those around us. Jesus comes and declares: Peace be with you.

The risen Jesus that the disciples meet is a real person, not a ghost. He is the same person they had journeyed with along the streets of Palestine; the one that had been crucified. He showed them the marks of the crucifixion and invited them to touch him to show them that he was a real person. He even ate some fish in front of them! In his gospel, Luke tries his best to show us that the disciples' experience of the risen Jesus was that of a real person. Moreover all this happens with a community of believers and at a meal.

Jesus comes in our midst too each time we gather as a community of faith; he comes with us especially when we come together around the table of the Eucharist. Paul reminds us that when the disciples come together, they form the body of Christ. The body of Christ that we celebrate is a participation in the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus; but it also carries in it the marks of the cross.

The marks of the cross are a reminder of our sins and the sins of the members of this body of Christ. These marks of the cross, these marks of our sins will be always with us, but we do not need to be afraid of our sinfulness. If we are faithful, we too will experience the resurrection.

Jesus points to the word of God and explains that all this had been foretold in the prophets. As a body of Christ we are nourished and linked to God's word where we find meaning for our misunderstandings. When we meet as body of Christ, we are invited to reflect on God's word for us, once again meeting Christ in the members of our community and in the poor and desolate around us. We are called to witness to all this!

We are witnesses to the presence of Jesus in his word, in the community of believers, but also in those who are poor and who require our assistance. Often the poor may be forgotten and left aside. It is our duty to remind ourselves and those around us of the presence of God in the poor.

With the strength of the Spirit that Jesus gives us, let us not be afraid to be witnesses to all this!

Fr Mario