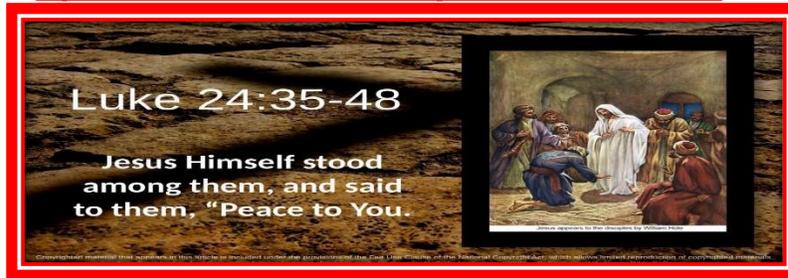


April 16, 2020 – Thursday of Easter Octave



Growing in the love of the Mystery of the Risen Lord and seeking to live it, more fully and more meaningfully in our lives.

Acts 3:11-26 and Lk 24:35-48

1. The initiative is always with the Lord, rather than with us.

According to the beginning of today's gospel reading, the disciples were together talking about all that had been happening since the women found the tomb of Jesus empty. The two disciples were telling their story of what had happened to them while they were walking to Emmaus. Others were sharing how the Lord had appeared to Simon Peter. It was while they were together that suddenly the risen Lord appeared among them. They didn't have to go looking for him, no more than the two disciples on the road to Emmaus or Simon Peter had to go looking for him. No, the risen Lord looked for them; he came to them; he stood among them, with his greeting 'Peace be with you'. That is how the risen Lord relates to us all. We don't have to go looking for him. He comes to us. He might come to us while we are walking along, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; he might come to us while we are grieving, as he came to Mary Magdalene. He might come to us while we are talking with and listening to other disciples, other people of faith, as in today's gospel reading.

The risen Lord is always coming to stand among us, wherever we are, whether we are in church or at home, or out walking. He comes to stand among us whatever our frame of mind or heart, whether we are sad or excited or puzzled. The initiative is always with the Lord, rather than with us. All we can do is to respond to his initiative towards us. He comes; we respond. Our response can evolve over time. In today's gospel reading, the initial response of the disciples to the Lord's coming was one of alarm and fright; that response gave way to joy, and then to loving service as they offered the Lord some food. Our response to the risen Lord's coming to us and standing among us is never a full response, at least not in this earthly life. There is always another step we can take in response to the Lord's coming, and the Lord will help us to keep taking that step.

2. To identify with the death of Jesus is easier than with his resurrection.

Luke's account of the appearance of the risen Lord to his disciples in today's gospel reading suggests that the disciples had great difficulty believing that it was the same Jesus they had come to know and love and had been crucified who was now standing before them. The gospel reading says that 'in a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost' and that 'their joy was so great that they still could not believe it, and they stood there dumbfounded'. Even today we struggle to take it in, to really believe it. We often find it easier to identify with the death of Jesus than with his resurrection. In our religious tradition images of the crucifixion are more common than images of the resurrection. We can easily connect with the suffering Jesus because of the suffering in our own lives. Like the disciples in the gospel reading, we stand before the good news of Easter dumbfounded, struggling to believe. Perhaps that is why the church gives us seven weeks of the Easter season to take it all in. We need time to recognize that the risen Lord is indeed standing among us, saying to us what he said to his disciples in the gospel reading, 'Peace be with you'. He offers us that peace of mind and heart which is the fruit of his love poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. As we allow ourselves to receive this gift of his reconciling love he sends us out as agents of reconciliation, as his peacemakers, just as he sent out the disciples in the gospel reading.

3. An honest examination of our lives

There is a need to make an honest examination of our lives. The Mystery of the Risen Lord is about joy and happiness. Do I radiate this joy to others or do others come across angry faces, irritated behavior and unpleasant conduct in me? The Mystery of the Risen Lord is about trust and confidence. Do I display this faith and belief especially when we face many problems and crises in life, to stand firm in hope? The Mystery of the Risen Lord is about the call to a new way of life. Am I courageous to embrace this new way of life in the Risen Lord and be willing to do away with my sinful habits and tendencies to fall away from God's presence?

Let us pray:

Lord Jesus, You, The Risen Lord, is in my midst, as You were with the Apostles, especially in the Most Holy Eucharist and especially in the Holy Word of God. Let me not be afraid of this Mystery. Let me not have an aversion towards it rather, let me grow in the love of the Mystery of the Risen Lord and seek to live it, more fully and more meaningfully in my life.

Jesus, I Trust In You