

3rd Sunday of Easter

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

1 Jn 2:1-5

Lk 24:35-48

There is a true story of a judge in Yugoslavia who had an accident. He was electrocuted when he reached up to turn on the light while standing in the bathtub. His wife found his body on the bathroom floor and called for help. Friends and neighbors showed up. He was pronounced dead and taken to the funeral home. In the middle of the night, he regained consciousness and when he realized where he was, he rushed over to the night security guard. But thinking that it was a ghost, the security guard ran off terrified. Then he thought of calling up his wife. But when he said "Hello, honey, it is I, your husband," she let out a scream and fainted. Then he tried calling his friends, but they thought that someone was trying to play some tricks on them. Then he called a friend in the next town who had not yet heard of his death. It was that friend who finally convinced his family and friends that he was alive.

Jesus faced a similar situation as we heard in the Gospel of today. He had to convince His disciples that He was not a ghost but had truly risen. He showed them His hands and feet, invited them to touch Him, and even ate with them.

The readings of today challenge us to the reality of the living presence of Christ. Jesus is with us, and he is around us. It is in a living person that we believe in, not in someone who lived and died two thousand years ago. Christ is alive in our lives. Jesus himself said, "I will be with you until the end of the age." Awareness of Christ's living presence strengthens our hope, brings us to the true repentance, and makes us better witnesses of Christ.

The first reading of today is the second of the five discourses preached by Peter. In it he addresses the Jewish assembly in Jerusalem where he was brought to trial for preaching Christ and His resurrection and for healing a crippled man in Jesus' name. Peter once again boldly proclaims Jesus to be the promised Messiah, who was rejected by the chosen people, put to death, and raised from the dead—fulfilling the prophecies of the Old Testament. So, Peter invites the Jews to repent and be converted so that their sins will be wiped away.

In the second reading, St. John asserts the basic Christian doctrine that Christ's death was a sacrifice offered for our sins. John tells us that true knowledge and love of God consists in acknowledging that Jesus is the expiation for our sins, bearing witness to him, and obeying His commandments. When Jesus appeared to His disciples, they thought that it was a ghost because they thought that everything was over with His death. The disciples had lost all their hope after the death of Christ. But, the resurrection filled them with hope and made them His bold witnesses.

Today we need men and women who will be living witnesses of Christ—who will make Christ's living presence and message known to the world. A dying woman who had her head in the lap of Mother Teresa asked, "Are you the God Jesus who loves the poor and the sick?" Today, many want to play God—by their pride, power, and wealth—not by their love, witness, and service. Jesus is a living reality. Let us be His witnesses by our words and our lives.