

The Third Sunday of Easter / Year A –
29/30 April 2017 –
Our Lady of Victory Parish Community –
HOMILY

1st Reading:

Acts 2:14, 22-33

- “ Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. . . . But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it. . . . God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses. Exalted . . . he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 16 - *Sung*

2nd Reading:

1 Peter 1:17-21

- “ conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of spotless unblemished lamb. . . . who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.”

GOSPEL:

LUKE 24:13-35

- “That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus’ disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened . . . Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. . . . *(They told of the events . . . including the discovery of the empty tomb by some women . . . “they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. They some of those with us went to the tomb and found things as the women had described, but him they did not see.” . . . they still did not understand . . . their focus; their hope “But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel . . . “; they had still not connected the death/crucifixion with the*

empty tomb . . . they still had not connected that this was part of God's saving plan . . .)

- "And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are!" Was it not necessary . . . Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, . . .

But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them." And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. . . . "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" . . . So they set out at once . . . Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread."

I. Take in the bones of this event: We have two disciples headed away from Jerusalem . . . they had apparently been close to Jesus during his earthly ministry . . . become **hopeful** about what he said and did . . . they had witnessed his suffering . . . his crucifixion and death . . . perhaps they had been among those who fled the scene that day and hid with so many of the others, fearing the same fate would befall them . . . they were still in Jerusalem when “some women from our group”, discovering the empty tomb, received that bewildering announcement from a “vision of angels” that he was **alive** . . . an announcement verified by others who had been with them . . . and then, bewildered themselves, they left Jerusalem . . . on foot . . . intentionally leaving because they had been “hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel” . . . and the redemption they had fixed in their minds and hearts was now shattered . . .

They were walking **away** from their connections . . . walking **away** from where they had once “experienced” hope . . . a **deep sense** that they had “found” hope . . . walking **away**, now . . . confused and lost . . . somehow convinced that they needed to go elsewhere . . .

“And it happened that while they were conversing and debating **Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.** He asked them, “**What are you discussing as you walk along?**”

We could get caught up in not only their reaction at that moment . . . or for that matter . . . what your reaction or my reaction might be if someone approached us as we were out walking or jogging or riding a bike and just started asking us questions . . . but our immediate reaction to that is secondary . . .

What is **primary** here, is the fact that **Jesus** was out pursuing **them** . . . **Jesus** went after **them** . . . **Jesus** drew near to **them** . . . despite the fact that they may have walked away from him as he hung, dying on a cross . . . despite the fact that they were hoping he would be the one to redeem Israel . . . to restore Israel to it's prestigious position among the nations as the chosen people of God . . . despite the fact that they were confused and lost and choosing to just move on and find whatever it was they were looking for . . . **Jesus pursued them . . . Jesus went after them . . . Jesus drew near to them . . . He was NOT going to give up on them . . .**

And he did not . . .

II. “ . . . they urged him, “Stay with us,” . . . So he went in to stay with them. And it happened . . . he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. With that . . . their eyes were opened . . . and not just the eyes in their heads . . . but the eyes of their minds . . . the eyes of their hearts . . . the eyes of their very being . . . and they recognized him . . . ”

THEN . . . then . . . they said to each other . . . “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us . . . opened the Scriptures to us . . . ”

Jesus, the one who went after them . . . Jesus, the one who pursued them . . . Jesus, the one who drew close to them . . . Jesus did this and in doing so, turned them around so that they, in turn, could bring this great news to those they had left behind . . . He lives! . . . he lives! . . . in the opening of the Scriptures . . . He lives! and most perfectly . . . in the breaking of the bread!

III. This very same Jesus does not give up on you . . . does not give up on me . . .

Despite the fact we may walk away from Him at times . . . despite the fact that we may not fully believe at times . . . despite the fact we may feel hopeless

and lost and times . . . confused and afraid at times . . .
 . **Jesus** pursues **us** . . . **Jesus** pursues **you** . . . **He**
pursues **me** . . . **Jesus** goes after **us** . . . **Jesus** draws
near to **us** . . . **because He will not let us go** . . . He
wants to come “in” and “**stay with us**” . . .

We may be preoccupied with all sorts of “stuff” in
our lives. . . we may not fully present to this time . . .
burdened with concerns and worries . . . we may even
be **clock watchers** . . . **Jesus still draws near** . . .
our hearts may not be **burning** within in us because
of the **Scriptures** that have just been opened, or
even, for that matter . . . the Homily that becomes an
extension of these testaments . . . **but it is Jesus**
who still opens all of them for us . . .

And shortly . . . it will be **Jesus** . . . the dead and
resurrected Jesus . . . by the power of the Spirit . . .
 . who, with great love and compassion and
patience . . . Jesus, who will beckon us to come . . .
 . come forward . . . come to meet Him in bread and
in wine that has been transformed . . .
transformed into His very body and blood . . .
taking that Body . . . that Blood into our very
beings . . . **because that is how He has chosen to**
come in and “stay with us!”

**WOW! A God who actually pursues us . . .
comes after us . . . draws near to us . . . a God
who stays with us . . . HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY
NOT BE EXCITED and OVERJOYED?**