



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Homily by Deacon Terry Ellerman
April 15, 2018 Third Sunday of Easter

Reading I Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

Psalm 4:2, 4, 7-9

Reading II I John 2:1-5

Gospel Luke 24:35-48

Homily

“This is the day of the Lord. Let us rejoice and be glad in him.” We wish to extend a Happy Easter to all of you. As Father Chris says, everyday is Easter Sunday because the Eucharist is such a special feast for all of us and the greatest of all feasts because we celebrate the Pascal mystery — Christ’s suffering, death and resurrection. Our readings today talk to us about the important of realizing that Jesus Christ truly died and rose from the dead. It is also a realization that we can share in his discipleship and need to go out into the world to share the good news.

In the Scripture passage about the disciples on their way to Emmaus, if you recall, it was Easter Sunday. These disciples were sad, depressed, lost and confused. The person they followed, called Jesus, is dead and even though the women said they had gone to the tomb and it was empty — they were not convinced that he wasn’t dead. So, there they are walking to Emmaus getting ready to begin a new life because the man they had followed for so many months was no longer there. Someone joins them along the road and they do not really know who it is. They told this stranger what had happened, and that their leader, Jesus, had been killed, and this man walking with them — broke open the Old Testament and told them about a man who was to come into this world to save the whole world.

So they got to Emmaus and the stranger was going to leave and the disciples said, “Will you stay with us. So he did. And at the breaking of the bread they realized who this person was, that it was Jesus, and then all of a sudden he was gone. Can you imagine how they felt, and how happy they were to now realize that this person they were leaving Jerusalem for — was now there. “I don’t have to start a new life. I can stay here and follow Jesus.” They rushed back to Jerusalem and joined the others. What happens? Jesus appears again and says, “Peace be with you. Shalom. Peace be with you. Don’t be afraid.” Everything was OK. He said, “Look at me. Look at my hands, look at my feet, look at my wounds. Touch me, I have skin. I have bones. It’s me.” And then he asks, “Do you have anything to eat?” So they give him a piece of baked fish. How many of you know any ghosts that eat fish? How many of you know any ghosts?

So there they were and Jesus asks, “Why are you troubled? I’m here. I’m alive. Believe it. I told you before I left that I was going to come back. In the Law of Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms it says, ‘A person is going to come into the world who is going

to redeem you. It's me.' " He gave them the courage to believe and go out and preach the Good News. So we see in the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles about the early church, and we see Peter doing that. Just ahead of this passage he heals a crippled person. And the Jewish leaders then start giving him a hard time and asking, "What are you doing?" And Peter answered, "I am carrying out the work of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ, the person that you just put to death. The person for whom you said, 'Let the murderer go, and crucify Jesus.'" But Jesus came to forgive all sins: the past, the present and the future. And therefore the disciples had the gumption they needed to do to go out and proclaim the Good News of Jesus.

Then in our second reading from the letter of John he says, "We need to be people of God, and as people of God we need to follow the commandments." If we say, "I believe in Jesus but I don't follow his commandments," then we are liars. We will make mistakes, and we will sin. And if we do sin, God will forgive us those sins.

The bottom line is, Jesus Christ was born, He died, and is risen. He has fulfilled what the Old Testament said, "A Messiah will come and redeem us." The question is, do we believe that? I think the answer is, "yes." Do we believe that he forgives our sins? I think the answer is "yes." But sometimes is there a doubt in your mind that what you have done, will God forgive?

I visit a lot of people in nursing homes and sometimes there are those who wonder, "Even though I have gone to confession, am I worthy when I die to go to Heaven?" Our Scripture is saying, "We are an Easter people. We are a people of hope. We are a people who believe in Jesus Christ who lived and died and has made a difference, and when we die we will be with him." The Good News is that he did die, and he did rise. The Good News is that he forgives our sins, and he also expects us to forgive others. We all want to be forgiven, but how many of us want to forgive. Yet that is what we are called to do.

The Sixth Grade after communion is going to sing a song called "Sanctuary" which is saying that our bodies are made in the image of God. And because of that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, and in a sense we are like that tabernacle that holds the body and blood of Jesus. When we receive communion, we remember that we are that tabernacle, we are that sanctuary. So when we come to communion today, do we receive Him worthily. But do we realized that we are transformed when we receive that Eucharist, just as when Jesus came into the midst of the disciples and said, "I expect you to go out into the world to make a difference." So when we sing that song today, we remember, we are temples of the Holy Spirit, we are sanctuaries, and it is our job to not only be one with Christ, but to be one with one another. So the question we ask ourselves is, "Our we one with him, and are we one with one another?" If we aren't, what are we going to do about it? For this is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad. We are an Easter people: people filled with hope, people filled with love, and a people filled with joy.

Terry Ellerman is a retired educator and serves as a deacon at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church in Quincy, Illinois. (TASCAM DR40 file 79)