

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 4/20/20

ACTS 2:14a, 36-41; PSALM 116:1-3, 10-17 1 PETER 1:17-23

LUKE 24:13-35

GOOD MORNING -

OUR READINGS TODAY ARE NOT EXACTLY LINKED TO ONE ANOTHER. PETER TELLS US THAT WE MUST ACT ON THIS GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS SERMON LED TO 3,000 BAPTISMS. (I WOULD BE AMAZED IF I INSPIRED 1 BAPTISM). OUR GOSPEL RELATES LUKE'S TELLING OF CHRIST'S VISITATION WITH TWO DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMANUS, AND FURTHER RELATES THE SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE (AS AT THE LAST SUPPER).

THE PASSAGE FROM ACTS IS A CONTINUATION OF PETER'S PENTACOST SPEECH. PETER TELLS HIS LISTENERS THAT BECAUSE GOD HAS ACTED, JESUS WHOM THEY CRUCIFIED, HAS BEEN RAISED, AND IS "BOTH LORD AND MESSIAH". UPON HEARING THESE WORDS, THOSE IN THE CROWD ARE "CUT TO THE HEART" WITH REMORSE, AND ASK WHAT THEY CAN DO. PETER TELLS THEM TO REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED IN JESUS' NAME TO RECEIVE FOREGIVENESS OF SINS AND

THE *GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*. THIS PROMISE OF FOREGIVENESS IS FOR EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD. JEWS AND GENTILES ALIKE. IMAGINE THAT – FOREGIVENESS – RECOGNIZING OUR SINFULNESS AND PROMISING TO DO BETTER. THIS IS OUR HOPE FOR SALVATION.

THE PSALMIST ECHOES THE PROMISE OF FOREGIVENESS AND OFFERS THAT “I WILL LIFT UP THE CUP OF SALVATION AND CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD.”

AT EASTER, MANY OF US PONDER THE STORIES OF JESUS’ APPEARANCE TO HIS FOLLOWERS IN THE DAY FOLLOWING HIS BRUTAL EXECUTION. I FIND INTERESTING THAT IN EACH OF THE APPEARANCES JESUS IS NOT RECOGNIZED AND IN ALL OF THE APPEARANCES TO THE DISCIPLES THERE IS FOOD. LUKE CHOSE TO PRESENT THREE STORIES IN HIS RESURRECTION CHAPTER 24. THE MIDDLE ONE (TODAY’S READING) HAS TO DO WITH THE TWO DISCIPLES WHO ARE LEAVING JERUSALEM BECAUSE THEY NO LONGER BELIEVE JESUS TO HAVE BEEN ANYONE BUT A PROPHET, A GOOD MAN BUT NOW PERMANENTLY DEAD. TWO MOMENTS OF THE

STORY ARE EMPHASIZED. FIRST, THESE DISCIPLES' HEARTS BURNED WHEN THEY HEARD THE SCRIPTURES (THE OLD TESTAMENT) INTERPRETED SO AS TO MAKE SENSE OF GOD'S DESIGN AND OF JESUS. SECOND, THEY RECOGNIZED JESUS IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD WITH THEM IN EMMANUS.

SCHOLARS ARGUE ABOUT THIS "BREAKING OF THE BREAD"; SOME SAY IT REFERS TO THE ACTION OF ANYONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR LEADING THE DINNER PRAYERS; OTHERS SAY IT IS A CONSCIOUS ATTEMPT TO RECALL THE ONE BREAKING OF THE BREAD, THAT OF THE LAST SUPPER. MOST SCHOLARS PREFER THE LATTER UNDERSTANDING. IN ANY EVENT, IT IS CLEAR THAT LUKE HAS STRUCTURED THE RESURRECTION STORY SO THAT THE READER SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE HIS POINT: FIRST, THE READING OF THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR INTERPRETATION, THEN THE EATING OF THE FOOD PREPARED BY GOD --- OUR EUCHARIST, NO?

CLEARLY, THERE WAS NO EUCHARIST AT THIS MEETING OF THE DISCIPLES WITH JESUS, ON THE ROAD, BUT THERE

WERE MANY, MANY REGULAR CELEBRATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST BETWEEN THAT TIME AND THE TIME (AD 85) OF LUKE. THE EVANGELIST WANTS HIS READER TO REALIZE, THEN, THAT THE RISEN JESUS CAN STILL BE MET AT EVERY EUCHARIST; AS A FAMOUS RESURRECTION TEXT SAYS, "IT IS THE LORD!" AND HE WANTS OUR HEARTS BURNING WHEN WE HEAR THE SCRIPTURES READ AND INTERPRETED.

IN SUMMARY, THE DISCIPLES' ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS TOUCHED EVERY EMOTION – SURPRISE, WONDER, PUZZLEMENT, DEEP MEMORY, A BURNING HEART, ESTATIC JOY! WHAT MUST THEY HAVE FELT WHEN A STRANGER SUDDENLY ENGAGED THEM IN DISCUSSION? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? BUT THEY SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN MORE AMAZED THAT HE *DIDN'T SEEM TO KNOW WHAT HAD JUST HAPPENED IN JERASLEM.* THEY WERE DRAWN INTO A SHARING OF SCRIPTURE FROM THE MOUTH OF THE ONE THEY DIDN'T QUITE YET UNDERSTAND WAS THE MESSIAH. IMAGINE THEIR ELATIONS WHEN THEY RECOGNIZED JESUS

**IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD. NO WONDER THEY RACED
BACK TO JERUSALEM TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE.**

**ON OUR OWN EMMANAUUS JOURNEYS, OUR GOD YEARNS TO
TOUCH OUR HEARTS WITH THE SAME REALITIES – SURPRISE,
WONDER, SOMETIMES PUZZLEMENT, THE BEAUTY OF DEEP
MEMORIES, A BURNING HEART, AND ESTATIC JOY! WE MEET
OUR GOD MADE FLESH IN SPRIPTURE. WE WALK THE ROADS
OF OUR LIVES ALWAYS IN THE COMPANY OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT OF LOVE. MAY OUR EYES BE ALWAYS OPEN, OUR
HEARTS READY TO BURN WITH KNOWING, AND OUR WHOLE
BEING READY TO SHARE THE JOY WITH COMMUNITY.**

**MY PRAYERS ARE THAT EACH AND EVERYONE ONE OF US IN
THIS COMMUNITY, WE CALL ST MATTHEWS/SAN MATEO, WILL
REMAIN HEALTHY AND SAFE AND PRAYFULLY TOGETHER.**

AMEN