

Third Sunday of Easter Year A Celebration summary by Dale J.

Sieverding: The resurrection appearances of Jesus are central elements of the Gospel in all three cycles of the lectionary. Scripture scholars believe that it is these resurrection accounts that were some of the first *written* recollections of the salvific events of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection

The story of Emmaus from Luke's Gospel is perhaps one of the best known stories of Jesus' appearance after the resurrection. The recognition of him in the "breaking of the bread" is an obvious image of the Eucharistic meal. The fledgling Christians were no doubt coming together for the "breaking of the bread" and doing what Jesus did on the night before he died. No doubt, this meal included reminiscence of Jesus as well as sharing of stories from the Hebrew scriptures.

The proclamation from the Acts of the Apostles is a well-developed exposition of the importance of Jesus' life, death and resurrection for the community. It contains the kernel of what would later become an article of the Creed, namely, that Jesus was both God and man, that he died on the cross, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven and sent the Holy Spirit.

The selection of First Peter is a deepening of the theology of Jesus life and death. It places Jesus in the scope of terrestrial history with universal significance attached to his resurrection. "Before the foundation of the world" Jesus was known and now revealed to you in glory.

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First Reading Acts 2:14, 22-33

It was impossible for Jesus to be held by death.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven,
raised his voice, and proclaimed:
"You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem.
Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.
You who are Israelites, hear these words.
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.
This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God,
you killed, using lawless men to crucify him.

But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death,
because it was impossible for him to be held by it.

For David says of him:

*I saw the Lord ever before me,
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.
Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;
my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.'*

"My brothers, one can confidently say to you
about the patriarch David that he died and was buried,
and his tomb is in our midst to this day.

But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him
that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne,
he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ,
that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld
nor did his flesh see corruption.

God raised this Jesus;

of this we are all witnesses.

Exalted at the right hand of God,

he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father
and poured him forth, as you see and hear."

The word of the Lord.

Commentary Acts 2:14, 22-33 by Deacon Owen Cummings: All the readings in the Easter season speak loud and clear the message of the Resurrection, as does St. Peter in this reading from Acts. It is found especially in the words: "God freed (Jesus) from death's bitter pangs, and raised him up again." The second occurrence of the command, "Listen to me" in v. 14, right at the beginning of the reading, is particularly interesting. The Greek verb literally reads "let it be put or placed in your ears." What is it that is to be placed in our ears? The message of Resurrection. If we are to arrive at the central meaning of the text, however, we must go beyond thinking of the Lord Jesus as an historical figure, as someone who lived in the first century AD. That, of course, is true, but a fuller understanding of the truth is that we, through baptism-confirmation-Eucharist, are put into the Lord Jesus. We become through grace his Body in our world. These words, then, apply to the Jesus who once was raised on that first Easter — they are in the past tense. But they apply equally to the promise that is made to us — they are spoken to us in the future tense: "God will free you from death's bitter pangs, and will raise you up again."

The reading also emphasizes God's "set purpose and plan" in the death of Jesus. That language has a kind of forensic feel to it, and that is unfortunate because, in William Barclay's words, "the Cross was a window in time allowing us to see the suffering love which was eternally in the heart of God." Resurrection is the final playing-out of the love of God that will not let us go, as it did not let Jesus go.

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Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

℟(11a) Lord, you will show us the path of life.

Or: **℟** Alleluia.

Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge;
I say to the LORD, "My Lord are you."
O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup,
you it is who hold fast my lot.

I bless the LORD who counsels me;
even in the night my heart exhorts me.
I set the LORD ever before me;
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices,
my body, too, abides in confidence;
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your faithful one to undergo corruption.

You will show me the path to life,
abounding joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

Psalm 16:1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11 Commentary by Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB: This psalm is a song of trust. It is a prayer which expresses a remarkable joy and confidence which are the result of the psalmist living a life fully committed to God. This also results in a strong sense of God's providence operative both in the present as well as the future. It has a clear two part structure. Verses 1-6 constitute a confession of trust in the Lord. Verses 7-11 express joyful confidence that life in God's presence will endure. The psalmist begins by expressing total trust in God. God will keep the psalmist safe by providing constant protection. God is the only one who can be relied upon to do this and therefore the psalmist would not even think of considering an alternative (Ps 16:1-2). The psalmist has chosen the Lord as a portion and

cup and this in turn has rendered the psalmist's future very secure (Ps 16:5). Relying totally on the Lord manifests a confidence and comfort for the psalmist which is always present and provides an unshakable stability (Ps 16:7-8). This joyful confidence permeates every aspect of the psalmist's being—heart, soul, and body (Ps 16:9). This tremendous confidence in God allows the psalmist to believe that he or she will never be abandoned to nothingness, symbolized by the terms Sheol and the pit (Ps 16:10). To the contrary, the Lord will provide the psalmist with the path of life. This path of life is the ultimate experience of the presence of the Lord. The psalmist is convinced that this presence and life will last forever (Ps 16:11).

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Second Reading 1 Peter 1:17-21

You were saved with the precious Blood of Christ, as with that of a spotless, unblemished lamb.

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Peter

Beloved:

If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially
according to each one's works,
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 a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world
but revealed in the final time for you,
who through him believe in God
who raised him from the dead and gave him glory,
so that your faith and hope are in God.

The word of the Lord.

Commentary 1 Peter 1:17-21 by John Paul Heil: Main Theme: The sacrificial blood of the risen Christ inspires our reverent conduct.

The author of the first Letter of Saint Peter encourages us during our time of "sojourning," that is, during the time of our earthly journey to our ultimate homeland in heaven, to conduct ourselves with "reverence"—a respect for one another based on what God has done and will do for us. This reverent conduct is

inspired by the realization that we were "ransomed", that is, freed from our slavery to our past futile and irreverent conduct inherited from our ancestors. It was by the imperishable, precious blood of Christ "as of a spotless unblemished lamb" that effected our ransom.

For a lamb to be suitable as a sacrifice to God it had to be physically spotless and unblemished. But these terms--spotless and unblemished--were also used for moral conduct. It is the precious blood of Christ as a morally spotless and unblemished sacrificial lamb that enables us to live morally spotless and unblemished lives in reverent conduct. It is at the Eucharist that we receive the precious blood of Christ, we who believe in the God who raised this Christ, as a morally spotless and unblemished sacrificial lamb, from the dead and gave him glory, so that our faith and hope in what God has done and will do for us through the risen Christ inspires us to reverent conduct before God and towards one another.

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Gospel Acclamation cf. Luke 24:32

✠ Alleluia, alleluia.

Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us;
make our hearts burn while you speak to us.

Gospel Luke 24:13-35

They recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

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 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?"

They stopped, looking downcast.

One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply,

"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem
who does not know of the things
that have taken place there in these days?"

And he replied to them, "What sort of things?"

They said to him,

"The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene,
who was a prophet mighty in deed and word
before God and all the people,

how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over
to a sentence of death and crucified him.
But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel;
and besides all this,
it is now the third day since this took place.
Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:
they were at the tomb early in the morning
and did not find his body;
they came back and reported
that they had indeed seen a vision of angels
who announced that he was alive.
Then some of those with us went to the tomb
and found things just as the women had described,
but him they did not see."
And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are!
How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things
and enter into his glory?"
Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
he interpreted to them what referred to him
in all the Scriptures.
As they approached the village to which they were going,
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.
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.
Then they said to each other,
"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 and returned to Jerusalem
where they found gathered together
the eleven and those with them who were saying,
"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"
Then the two recounted
what had taken place on the way
and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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