

EASTER 3 – 2021
Acts 3:13-15;17-19
1Jn 2:1-5
Lk 24:35-48

St Luke's account of Jesus' post crucifixion story is one of a journey that his disciples took as he led them from fear to wonder, from wonder to faith, from faith to joy and from joy to evangelistic service.

By Easter evening at least three people said they had seen the risen Christ. The disciples were gathered together in the Upper Room when Jesus appeared and greeted them with the words, "Peace be with you." Their immediate reaction was to think they had seen a ghost or an angelic figure. They were dumbfounded but full of joy and then to add to their confusion Jesus asks them for something to eat. Ghosts and angels don't eat, but Jesus did. Their Lord and master was recognisable and present with them as he had been before his death, but now he was not limited by time or space. He was not a figment of their imagination, neither was he a disembodied soul that had left his decaying body.

Jesus appears to his disciples in his resurrection body just as we hope we will after death. St Luke tells us in the Acts of the Apostles that until his ascension, Jesus met with his disciples many times, speaking with them, teaching them and breaking bread with them. It is in the breaking of bread that Jesus is able to be recognised. He was recognised in this action by two of his disciples following their journey to Emmaus during which Jesus had spoken to them about what the prophets and psalmists had said about God's suffering Messiah. He did the same thing to the disciples in the Upper Room enabling them to understand the drama of creation, temptation, sin, forgiveness, love and hate, death and life and more importantly how they themselves have been caught up in God's plan of salvation. They were to become agents of God's agent Jesus and charged by him to proclaim the good news of his Resurrection to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Today's first reading tells us something of that mission. The apostles announced to the people that they were witnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection. Peter tells the Jews that they had acted in ignorance so that the prophecies about the Suffering Messiah are fulfilled. God was giving them a second chance and if they accept that chance they should repent, change their direction in life and embrace God's love revealed to them and the Gentiles in and through Jesus.

Peter, as does St John's first Epistle, is making it clear that we do not come to know God through obedience to a complex set of rules that make us appear outwardly good. David Torkington, a contemporary mystic, tells us of a time that he saw a friend's Irish father digging his garden. Rather stupidly David asked what he was doing. The man replied, "I do be digging the garden." David was bemused by this response and it was explained to him by an Irish nun who said that unlike English, the Irish language has a continuous present tense. What the Irish father said was, "I have been digging the garden, I am digging the garden, and I will continue to dig the garden."

God's love is a continuing present in our lives. He has loved us, he is loving us and he will continue to love us. God's love that raised Jesus from the dead on the first Easter Day enables him to re-enter it on every day. Jesus promised to make his home with us if we will open the door of our lives and invite him in. We experience God's love here and now in every present moment and that is why Jean Pierre de Caussade, a French Jesuit priest can say, "The present moment contains far more than we have the capacity to receive, for it is full of infinite treasures" Torkington D, Prayer Made Simple, CTS, 2018.

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