



Bible Study

Third Sunday of Easter

Year A

St. Maria Goretti and
St. Peter Claver
Parishes

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“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 Messiah 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.” Lk. 24:25-27

Reading I: Acts 2:14, 22-33

JUST A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS... We commonly refer to prayer as a talk with Jesus. But can a talk with a friend be a talk with Jesus? *“There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal ... But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit - immortal horrors or everlasting splendors ... Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses.”* These are the words of C. S. Lewis from his work entitled, *“The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses.”* His perspective gives a talk with Jesus a different dimension. When we consider our neighbors as immortal and holy objects, every act on their behalf becomes a prayer, that is, a talk with Jesus.



**DOES YOUR HEART
BURN WHEN YOU
PRAY?**

The words of St. Peter in the first reading are quite bold and courageous. Peter had previously denied that he knew Jesus, but now he was publicly representing Him. The crowds that gathered around the Upper Room were full of amazement and anxious for an explanation. He boldly proclaimed the truths about Jesus the Christ to the same people and governing authorities who had put Jesus to death. He proved that Jesus, not David, is both Lord who rules in heaven and the Messiah sent to save Israel (vv. 22-36). Where did this fisherman get these words and courage? He received his knowledge from his constant association and conversations with Jesus. He received the power of the Holy Spirit because of what he saw and heard. He did just as Christ had commanded and foretold (1:8). St. Peter’s preaching and acts on behalf of others were prayers – talk with Jesus. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** What is the source of your knowledge and strength to explain the gospel of Jesus Christ to others?

BREAD IN THE BIBLE

A staple food made from flour or meal and mixed with a liquid, usually combined with leaven and kneaded, then shaped into loaves and baked. Bread played an important role in Israel’s worship. During the celebration of Pentecost, “two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah...of fine flour...baked with leaven” were offered with the animal sacrifices (Lev 23:17). A type of ritualistic bread known as Showbread consisted of 12 loaves baked without leaven by the Levites and placed weekly in the tabernacle, and later in the Temple (Ex 25:30). When removed at the end of the week, the loaves were eaten by the priests. The purpose of the showbread was to symbolize God’s presence with His people.

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper: “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body’ ” (Matt 26:26). By His sacrifice, Christ became the Bread of Life for His people that they may eat of Him and find forgiveness of sin and eternal life. (From Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

Reading II: 1 Peter 1:17-21

JUST A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS... This letter of St. Peter was probably written before the year 67 when he was in Rome. The purpose was to encourage Christians to recall the basic doctrines of Christianity and to encourage them to endure persecution. In one respect, Peter reminded the early Christians to maintain their relationship with God the Father in prayer.

In the previous verses, he reminded them and all Christians of the obligation to sustain the relationship with God the Creator by living holy lives (vv. 14-15). The statement in verse 17, “You address as Father the one who impartially judges...,” is a reference to the Lord’s Prayer. This is evidence that the Lord’s Prayer had become a part of early Christian liturgy. Because Jesus ransomed us with His life, God is our Father. Therefore, we must keep that relationship in tact by prayer, so that even persecutions and sufferings in this life may allow us to develop a closer relationship with our Father. **DISCUSSION QUESTION:** How does a close relationship with God help you endure trials and disappointments?

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

JUST A LITTLE TALK WITH JESUS... St. John Chrysostom writes; "*Prayer is the place of refuge for every worry, a foundation for cheerfulness, a source of constant happiness, a protection against sadness.*" If we define prayer as conversation with God in which God reveals Himself, then we may consider that the walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus was a prayer by the disciples of Jesus to relieve their despair and disappointment. Their faith, hope, joy and purpose were restored with just a little talk with Jesus.

The two disciples were walking to Emmaus discussing Jesus' death and the reports of His resurrection (v. 10), but not knowing what to make of the situation, when Jesus Himself joined them (vv. 17-18). This started out a sullen disappointing seven mile walk. Jesus appeared in the midst of their sadness. Sometimes we think we are walking alone in our disappointments, but Jesus walks along with us.

Jesus began His dialogue with the disciples by asking, "*what events?*" His question shocked the disciples into immobility. His response wounded them emotionally and renewed their sorrow. Cleopas' sarcastic comment tells us that Jesus was the talk of Jerusalem (v. 19). Sometimes in our despair, our initial prayer may be centered on our personal loss and not on God's divine plan for us. Jesus' comment was also a test of faith, as the disciples began to instruct this pretend stranger on what Jesus meant to them. Sometimes our trials and disappointments are opportunities to renew our faith. Our faith is renewed by telling others what Jesus has done in our lives.

Jesus responded to Cleopas' sarcasm by showing them that they had not allowed the Scriptures to influence their behavior and thinking (vv. 20-24). Jesus explained that all was foretold in the Old Testament. The disciples had overlooked the prophecies about the Messiah having to suffer, preferring rather to focus only on those that predicted His glorification. Sometimes in our sufferings we want the miracle cure and not the renewed life in Christ that a slow recovery gives.

Not knowing it was Jesus, but knowing that the dialogue with a person of spiritual substance helped their depression and disappointment, they asked Him to remain with them. His "*breaking of the bread*" revealed Jesus' resurrected appearance. Sometimes, in our disappointment we forget that even expressing disappointment and anguish is a prayer. The recognition of Jesus is the climax of the story (vv. 30-31). These verses show that even in our disappointments and anguish, we must have a little talk with Jesus, who will reveal all He has and will do for us. **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** How does this story help you to comfort others? Is this a time of trial for you?

Pray About It!

Monday

Read Matt. 5: 10-12. Is suffering a blessing?

Tuesday

Read Matt. 5:3-5. Can you celebrate your sufferings?

Wednesday

Read Heb. 10:32-34. Do you mourn the loss of property and possessions? Why? Why not?

Thursday

Luke 24:13-35. Offer someone a word of encouragement.

Friday

Attend Mass, receive the Eucharist, and recite the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1359 The Eucharist, the sacrament of our salvation accomplished by Christ on the cross, is also a sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for the work of creation. In the Eucharistic sacrifice the whole of creation loved by God is presented to the Father through the death and the Resurrection of Christ. Through Christ the Church can offer the sacrifice of praise in thanksgiving for all that God has made good, beautiful, and just in creation and in humanity.

Is it possible to see the Eucharist as a sacrifice and thanksgiving during times of hope and despair? Do you see a connection to the Gospel reading?

Resources: Luke – Jerome Kodell, O.S. B. ; Collegeville Bible Commentary, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville Minn., p. 978-979; *Living Liturgy Spirituality, Celebration, and Catechesis for Sundays and Solemnities Year A 2017*, Joyce Zimmerman, C. PP. S. Kathleen Harmon, S.N.D. de N., Christopher W. Canlon, S. M. Liturgical Press Collegeville, Mn. pp. 117-119; Scripture texts in this work are taken from the *New American Bible, revised edition* © 2010, 1991, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Washington, D.C. and are used by permission of the copyright owner. All Rights Reserved. No part of the New American Bible may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the copyright owner. The Sunday Readings Cycle A, Kevin O' Sullivan, O.F.M Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, 160-167; <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catechism/catechism-of-the-catholic-church/epub/index.cfm#> ;

This meditation is prepared by Deacon Terrel J. Broussard for personal use in Adult Faith Formation at St. Peter Claver and St Maria Goretti Parishes in New Orleans, La. ©2014