

## Fr James' homily for the Third Sunday of Easter 2021



First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 13:13-19  
Second Reading: First Letter of St John 2:1-5  
Gospel: Luke: 24:35-48

Luke 24 is one of the great chapters of Holy Scripture and we read from it on this third Sunday of Easter. Last year the passage given to us was the earlier part of the chapter, the events on the road to Emmaus. This year we read the aftermath...what happened next when the travellers returned to Jerusalem.

What is striking in this is the basic fact of the novelty and the weirdness of the resurrection of Jesus. Here is something new, never before experienced and quite beyond the expectation of the witnesses. This is the message with which we as the Church have been entrusted...and all too often we too don't know what to make of it and what to do with it.

You've heard me say before how Bishop Barron, the great American evangelist, is fond of quoting Prime Minister David Cameron - so much in the news at present! Prime Minister Cameron, never overlooking a chance for politics, is quoted as saying that the message of Easter is all about kindness and compassion, hard work and responsibility....? Really? No it is not! These are all very good things and dear to the hearts of believers and non-believers alike, but nothing to do with the meaning of the resurrection. This is just another attempt to tame Jesus and reduce him to our convenience, as has happened so many times. Even the Church herself, or members thereof, have made such attempts over the centuries.

The truth of Easter is that Jesus who was crucified rose bodily from the dead into a new glorified life. Not an abstraction and not a symbol of some set of values, but for real. "see for yourselves" Jesus says to the disciples in the Gospel today. It is weird. It is new.

Today as then, people hold all sorts of views about what happens to us at death, from the idea that death is the end, to the fond nonsense that X, Y or Z is up there smiling down upon us. The resurrection is different. He is alive, body and soul, and the Gospel today is keen to show us the realism of that: "Have you anything to eat?" It is wonderful to hear how the witnesses are incredulous with sheer joy at what is beyond their expectations.

Why does this matter? Jesus was put to death by all sin, including yours and mine. His resurrection is God's judgement on all that, a judgement of newness and hope. The

resurrection is a challenge to me and to you to live the life of repentance, as today's Gospel says...and the fact that most of us will hear that with a heavy heart means we have not yet got the message, despite years in the Church! Our challenge is to be converted and to make it possible for my sin to be wiped away. This is the message Peter gives in the first reading. In the second, St John, the beloved disciple, reminds us of his wisdom: heaven and earth have been reunited in Jesus and renewed in his resurrection. The point of our life, and of our death, is to make all of it about KNOWING him. Spending time with him in all the ways the life of our faith unfolds.

For, as we know him, so God's love - which in the end is the resurrection - comes to life within us. All of that too is hard work and responsibility, but a different sort of work from that which the politicians advocate when they ask for your vote!

Fr Tom and I wish you a very blessed and joyful Easter!

Amen.

*Fr James and Fr Tom wish you a blessed Sunday. Keep safe and well, and never hesitate to pick up the telephone and be in touch. See you in church I hope! Keep in close contact with the website for news of how practical plans are developing.*