

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter (B)

15<sup>th</sup> April 2018

'Keeping body & soul together'

Acts 3: *the God of our ancestors ... has glorified His servant Jesus*

Ps 4: *Lift up the light of Your face on us, O Lord*

1Jn 2: *we can be sure that know God only be keeping His commandments*

Lk 24: 35–48: *Yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves.*

This Gospel passage from Luke shows that we are still very much concerned with Easter itself, this 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter. We're still hearing about the day of the Resurrection, the evening of that Sunday on which Our Lord had risen. After His appearance to the two disciples walking to Emmaus, then, as we heard, He appears to the Apostles who are amazed, overwhelmed, at this occurrence.

But what is it about the wounds, and the fish? Jesus seems to make a big thing of showing the apostles His wounded hands and feet, still with the marks of the nails that pierced His body whilst on the Cross. And then, as they still remained dumbstruck, he took some grilled fish from their dinner table and ate it. What is the meaning of these actions of Jesus? Well, surely it is to assure them that they accept for real His bodily resurrection. All sorts of doubts arise in their hearts when He appears, and Jesus knows this. Most likely, they simply didn't believe the

evidence of their eyes. He wants to instil in their minds the assurance that His Resurrection is a definite reality, not some sort of fantasy, phantasm, or mistaken enthusiasm. It is, in fact, really important, that Our Lord's Resurrection wasn't just some spiritual resurgence, or a releasing of the spirit of the Son of God from an imprisoning human body, but a truly bodily event. Whilst His body is freed from some of its material limitations, yet it is still a body, and the same body. It is still Jesus, still 'God made man.' And this insistence of Our divine Lord in keeping His humanity assures us that God made us body and soul for a good reason: both mankind's body and soul are good, and both should be cared for, kept holy, and kept together. Jesus did not 'flee' the body at the earliest opportunity; no, He rose again in that body, and has sanctified the flesh, and carried that human flesh into the glory of heaven. This means that we should care for the body: for our own body, as it is a gift from God, keeping it healthy, avoiding as much as possible activities that quite clearly harm the body; and also for the bodies of others, making sure that we feed and clothe those

who are dependent on us, especially the very young and the very old.

The two important activities that I alert you to this weekend in the Newsletter, I suppose, could both be treated under this heading: ‘the dignified bodily care of others,’ to defend life, howsoever vulnerable. So, I ask you to take your Newsletter and to prayerfully study these two considerations: the ‘March for Life’ next month in London, and the ‘Night Shelter’ next winter. In both these ways you can show that our faith compels us to care for the weakest and most downtrodden in society — both unborn and born.

Last week’s dreadful decision by Ealing Council to give in to aggressive pro-abortion protestors and ban a 23-yr peaceful, pro-life prayer vigil from outside an abortion clinic in their borough makes it all the more urgent that we make our ongoing stand for the unborn, and for the right to life that they deserve. It can never be an acceptable position to say that someone would be better off killed in the womb, as if their bodily life was of no consequence. No: the baby, and for that matter the mother perhaps coerced or in other dire straits, deserves better than that from a so-called civilized society. Let’s

make this year’s ‘March for Life’ the biggest ever, and a beautiful statement about our God-given mission to defend human life. It’s just 1 afternoon of your time, but together with 1000s of others we can make an impact on our capital with a stand for our tiny unborn brothers and sisters.

Our second project is much further off, but is also very important. Please take, read, and reflect carefully on the insert in your Newsletter today, and see if you are in a position to offer some of your time and talent to supporting our 1-night/week contribution to next winter’s homeless Night Shelter. Tomorrow (16<sup>th</sup> April) is the feast of the patron saint of homeless people, St Benedict Joseph Labre, a man who spent his life in perpetual pilgrimage, especially in Rome, and in adoration of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. I ask that his prayers will be efficacious in helping you make that generous act of faith to get this project off the ground next winter for those people — perhaps hidden from immediate sight on our borough’s streets — who are homeless and who suffer worst of all in the cold of winter. The Catholic parish in Waltham Cross is in on this project too, and so I feel that we should act alongside them in offering our Catholic love-in-action. Jesus died and rose for us in His human body — let’s love and respect the bodies of others.