

Dominica III Paschae A

Lectio Divina by Fr. Randy Soto

I. Lectio

A. *“Each catechetical moment is an Emmaus event. On the road to Emmaus, the Risen Lord broke open the Scriptures and broke bread with two disciples. Gathered together with him, they came to understand the **kerygma**. Their hearts burned within them. They ran to witness his risen presence to the others. Along the road of life, the Church breaks open the Word in her preaching and teaching. Through her sacramental ministry, she shares the life of the Risen Lord. Those who are open to her words and deeds soon discover the joy of belonging to the Church, the very Body of Christ. The more receptive they are to this grace, the greater their loyalty to the Lord and his Church. For loyalty is love expressed in deed. And the greater their loyalty, the stronger the witness of their life to the world”* (Bishop Serratelli).

B. In the First reading we are given that wonderful discourse of Peter on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the College of the Apostles. With unction and great articulation Peter expounds the kerygma (essential message) of the Gospel: that Christ being God, became man, and suffered and died, nailed to a cross for our redemption. He also has been raised by the Father and is seated at the right Hand of God. Scholars see in this exquisite oral discourse a *Midrash* of Ps 16 which is used to demonstrate that the Apostles are strengthened by knowing that they always count with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

C. Ps 16 is a song to life; an ode that sings God’s triumph over sin and death. We are confident that God will never give us into death nor will he allow us to know decay. This beautiful hymn sings to the power of God and to the utter trust we should always place on his name: *“Lord, you will show us the path of life.”*

E. In the Second Reading, Saint Peter again exhorts us to remember always that we have been rescued at the price of Jesus’ Blood and we have been incorporated to his death and resurrection through the gift of our Baptism: *You were redeemed with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”* Two very important reasons for us to take seriously whatever we do in this life so that by placing our faith and hope in Jesus, we may come to share with him the love which flows from the Father to the Son and vice versa without end.

F. We read today in Luke’s Gospel the candid scene of the two disciples walking to Emmaus. The whole passage is built on a concentric structure and it is geared to instruct the whole community on the nature of Jesus’ new presence in our midst, the Eucharist. The physical presence cedes to the sacramental one: *“Was is not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and to enter into his Glory? [...] they recounted how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”*

III. Meditatio

A. The two disciples "were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all the things that had happened" (Lk 24:13-14). "They were talking and discussing together" about what had happened in Jerusalem (Lk 24:15). At the same time, however, their path is marked with sadness—"and they stood still looking sad"(Lk 24:17)—and a loss of hope—"we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel (Lk 24:21).

B. Fundamentally speaking, the situation is one of a loss of faith: "Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (Lk 24:15-16). St. Augustine comments: "They said, '*we were hoping that he was the redeemer of Israel.*' O disciples, you were hoping; does this mean that you no longer have hope? Behold, Christ lives but your hope is dead! Indeed, Christ is alive; but the living Christ finds the disciples' hearts without life. So he breaks open for them the entire OT so that they may recognize that all prophecies from of old have completely been fulfilled in Christ's sacrificial death and glorious resurrection. Having done that, Jesus goes on and breaks the bread with Cleophas and his son Simon (Eusebius in *Historia Ecclesiastica*). It was this second break-opening that brought light to the disciples in recognizing the Risen Christ.

C. Because we are all aware of our own fragilities, and because it's very easy to give into temptation, we witness to our new Catholics that God's grace is more powerful than any sin we may have committed. Jesus, by his gratuitous Mercy grants us forgiveness of the sins committed after Baptism through the Sacrament of Penance.

III. Oratio

We begin our celebration by praising the Name of the Lord with Ps 65: "*Let all the earth cry out to God with joy; praise the glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise, alleluia*" (Introit); then we pray to experience personally the Glorious Resurrection of our bodies with love and thanksgiving: "*God our Father, may we look forward with hope to our resurrection, for you have made us your sons and daughters, and restored the joy of our youth.*" (OP); during the offertory, we pray for our final perfection in heaven: "*May the great joy you give us come to perfection in heaven*" (PG). Christians rejoice because "*He has made us children of the light, rising to new and everlasting life. He has opened the gates of heaven to receive his faithful people. His death is our ransom from death; his resurrection is our rising to life*" (Preface). The only way to recognize the authentic presence of Jesus among us is to break the Eucharistic bread together: "*The disciples recognized the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread, alleluia!*" (CA) Finally, we ask the Father to show us the Glory of the Risen life in Christ: "*Lord, look on your people with kindness and by these Easter mysteries bring us to the glory of the resurrection*" (PC).

III. Contemplatio

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

John Cardinal O'Connor

Lord Jesus, we your people pray to You for our priests. You have given them to us for OUR needs. We pray for them in THEIR needs.

We know that You have made them priests in the likeness of your own priesthood. You have consecrated them, set them aside, anointed them, filled them with the Holy Spirit, appointed them to teach, to preach, to minister, to console, to forgive, and to feed us with Your Body and Blood.

Yet we know, too, that they are one with us and share our human weaknesses. We know too that they are tempted to sin and discouragement as are we, needing to be ministered to, as do we, to be consoled and forgiven, as do we. Indeed, we thank You for choosing them from among us, so that they understand us as we understand them, suffer with us and rejoice with us, worry with us and trust with us, share our beings, our lives, our faith.

We ask that You give them this day the gift You gave Your chosen ones on the way to Emmaus: Your presence in their hearts, Your holiness in their souls, Your joy in their spirits. And let them see You face to face in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread.

We pray to You, O Lord, through Mary the mother of all priests, for Your priests and for ours. Amen.

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