

2021 April 18

Third Sunday of Easter.

Reading:

First: Acts 3.13-19 "The God of our fathers has glorified his servant Jesus." (13b)

The Psalm: 4 "The Lord hears when I call to him." (3b)

Second: 1 John 2.1-5, "If anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." (1b)

The Gospel: Luke 24.35-48, "Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread." (35b)

Forgiveness Proclaimed

While the College of Apostles listening to the story of the two returnees from Emmaus, Jesus suddenly came from nowhere and stood before them. In spite of the Emmaus testimony and the very visible, audible, and tangible presence of Jesus they could not and did not believe. Jesus then invites them to come closer and touch him so that they may realize that it was not a ghost but the living Jesus. However, they did not come closer nor touch him. For them he might still be a ghost! They had to wait for a week to truly touch and feel him to make sure that he lives, and lives in a body, which is tangible for mortal humans. That way they came to accept the resurrection of Jesus. However, it took a while for them to make it an article of their faith and worth proclaiming, which really happened only after the Pentecost.

The event of touching and feeling of the body of Jesus happened when he invited the so-called 'doubting Thomas' to come closer and see his wounds and lay his hands on his side. Thomas did not even for a split second think that he was seeing a ghost. He immediately went close to the risen Jesus and touched him. He did this not because he disbelieved but he wanted to have that touch of love and intimacy with Jesus once again. He needed a healing! He got it and he became the true and convinced believer in Jesus even before the Pentecost. And he dared to take the message of the Good News to the very ends of the earth.

Jesus talked to the disciples after trying to convince them about his resurrection. He once again reminded them of the necessity for the Son of man to undergo persecution and death leading to the resurrection, just as he did to the Emmaus travelers. Then Jesus once again instructed them about the purpose of his coming to earth and undergoing all the ordeals in life, which resulted in his resurrection. That purpose was and is, "*Repentance and forgiveness of sin is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*" (Luke 24.47-48) And Jesus declared the disciples witnesses to all that happened to him. We the followers of Jesus witnesses to, and we are commissioned and empowered by the Spirit to proclaim in place and out of place that Jesus is risen, we have seen, Alleluia!

The forgiveness Jesus proclaimed was unique, universal, and unconditional. It extends and is available to the whole of humanity for all times, till the end of time. This witnessing and proclamation is the whole of the Christian *kerygma* (proclamation). Only in Jesus Christ among all the 'divinities' available in the whole world this unconditional forgiveness and the consequent unconditional love from Almighty God offered to all humanity. Those who confess faith in Jesus have to feel proud about this great gift of Jesus to humanity. And they must remember that it is not a 'keepsake', but something to be necessarily and continuously given out and continuously received in!

(The readings of the day are given at the beginning. The numbers in parentheses refer to the quotes from them. Good to go through the readings beforehand to properly understand the Reflections)

Shalom World TV 24/7 in North America.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMk1A20un1M>

<https://shalomworld.org/>

<https://shalommedia.org/>

<https://shalommedia.org/endorsement/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNJQfPj9bBE>

