

FROM FR. CHRIS ALIMAJI'S DESK 2021

Reflections on Witnessing for the Risen Christ – Third Sunday of Easter

Our Bible Readings are Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2:1-5a; Luke 24:35-48; and our psalm of praise is Psalm 4. My prayer for us this weekend is: Let the Lord open our minds to understand the Scriptures! The Gospel passage today ended with the message: “You are witnesses of these things.” (Lk. 24:48). In this Season of Easter, we, the Christians, are into a New Era of Evangelization. After the Lord had trained the Apostles and thousands of disciples, died on the Cross, and rose again for our justification, so to speak, he appearances after his resurrection echo a new phase in the establishment of this New Way, we now call the Christian Religion. Prior to the Resurrection of Christ, it was just a notorious sect yet to become a religion. Notice the change of events ensuing from the Resurrection of our Founder, Jesus of Nazareth.

God the Father has glorified his servant Jesus and made him Lord and Christ. We are called to convert to him, so that in his name, our sins may be wiped away (cf. Acts 3:19). This is the good news we are waiting for. The raising of Jesus from the dead restores all believers to life, and our defilement is mitigated as it were, so that we become the new people of God called to grace in Jesus Christ. This is the heart of all Easter messages we are to become witnesses to. Yes, the love of God is made perfect in all servants of Christ (cf. 1 John 2:5). Last weekend’s readings depicted the emergence of the community of Christians around the Apostles of Christ. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to see life and existence in a new way, which gave rise to them sharing their belongings in common, (cf. Acts 4:32-35). In fact, they began to bank in the Lord through his Church – the Christian Community. The joy of the Church of Christ built on the Apostles at that earliest time of the New Testament is the fact that the prophecies of the Old Testament are fulfilled in the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Lk. 24:44), hence he is the Christ – God’s anointed One, whom Peter referred to as “the Holy and Righteous One” in our first reading this Sunday. Like with the disciples going back to Emmaus, Jesus is our companion on this journey of faith through life, even when we are disillusioned or disappointed. This is the reason for all the vibrancy we experience this Easter Season. If anyone should ask ‘Why are the Christians rejoicing?’ That is the answer. We have come to realize that our faith is not misplaced when we follow Jesus Christ. This is because God has made him Lord and Messiah. Period! On rising, He brings peace to our frightened world, through the Holy Spirit, and instituted the forgiveness of our sins (cf. Lk. 24:46-49; John 20:19-23). This is a Christian Sacrament.

Therefore, we are spiritually free and redeemed in Christ. The Lord on appearing to the Apostles and disciples in the Upper Room, and while speaking to them, opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. Let our minds also be opened to fully understand the Scriptures. This should be our prayer also. Let us develop a new taste for reading the Scriptures, the Bible. Now we can give our time, talent, and treasure to the Lord. This means banking in the Lord, placing our savings and fixed deposits with him. What an idea! We give until we have nothing left. Yes, we become witnesses by demonstrating our faith in so many ways, by word and action. For many of us, this season should mark a new beginning in our Christian journey. The Lord has given us a new lease of life. Think about that. How have you experienced the risen Lord in your discipleship? Or in what way can you recount the Lord revealing himself to you? Hold on to that as your new starting point! And, please, you too are called to be a witness. Therefore, begin to tell the story. May the risen Lord give us the courage and the boldness to join his witnesses! Amen! Alleluia!