Third Sunday of Easter

Acts 3: 13-15,17-19

Psalm 4

1 John 2:1-5Luke 24: 35-48

Ghosts! They thought they were seeing a ghost! It isn’t the first time that the apostles thought they were seeing a ghost. They were terrified. Same as us if we thought we were seeing ghosts.

So the first thing that Jesus does is to try to put them at ease. “Peace be with you,” he says. “Touch me,” he says. “Give me something to eat,” he says. This is no ghost. Jesus is alive. The real Jesus. The disciples saw him die on the cross (or at least heard about the crucifixion). Then this Jesus rose from the dead, body and soul. Now he comes to them as a real man and as a real God.

Jesus reminds his folks that he foretold them all this. They just didn’t understand. Now they have proof that what was foretold has come to pass. Jesus is alive. Impossible but true. Jesus opens their minds to understand to all the scripture readings that dealt with his suffering, death, and resurrection.

In our first reading Peter chides the disciples that they gave up on Jesus and handed him over to Pilate to be put to death. At that time, the people didn’t understand what was happening. They acted out of ignorance. Now that they know the real score there are consequences attached to this truth. Repent and convert so that sins can be wiped away.

Let me explain. Sins are what kept us distant from our Father in heaven. Sins are a cause of separation. In those olden days, to become closer to their God, the people offered up a sacrifice – usually a bloody one. (In this day and age, to erase the separation, we would probably text the Father and hope for a reply that all is well [Possibly with a happy face emoji]). Back then, blood meant life. So the people offered up life to the Father. This life became sacred, holy, dedicated to God. Then some of this life was poured out on the people. Thus they came to share in the life of God.

St. John in his first letter says: “Beloved: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God.” The Father accepted the sacrifice of his Son so that, forever more, there would be no cause of separation between us and the Father. Only if we allow it to be.

So what are the consequences of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Son of God? We are a new people washed in the blood of the Lamb. We have a new destiny – to be one with the Father for all time, beyond time, because Jesus shares his new life with us, a life that is everlasting. We are not to be ‘ghosts’. We are to be real people who want to share this Good News with all whom we meet. We have to preach it with all that we are. Show people our hands and feet and head and heart. Have supper with others. By how we act and talk, we preach repentance of sins. That is to say, nothing can stand in the way of us being close to our God and a new life shared. Nothing stands in the way of us being close to one another (unless the other rejects our message). Do not be afraid. Be at peace with our God and be at peace with each other.

Be real is this new reality. Try to be at peace with one another. Do not terrify the other. Don’t be a ghost.