

Our Sunday Readings

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES
3:13-15,17-19
PSALM 4:2,4,7-9
I JOHN 2:1-5a
LUKE 24:35-48

Witnesses

ACTS 3:13-15,17-19

Reading closely

1. How might Peter feel as he gives this speech?
2. What are all the ways Peter refers to God and to Jesus in this passage?
3. What all is contrasted in this passage?
4. What does Peter ask of his listeners?
5. What are all the ways people might respond to Peter?
6. If you had heard Peter, how would you have responded?
7. Why do you think God gives the people another chance?

Living the word

8. Has God ever seemed to overrule a decision you made?
9. Share a time you discovered you were wrong about a judgment you made.
 - a. How did you realize you were wrong?
 - b. Did you readily admit you were wrong?
 - c. Did you try to make amends?

THE FIRST READING

Healed in Jesus' name

Peter has just healed a man who was asking for alms beside the Jerusalem temple. People gather

around Peter in amazement, which creates the opportunity for this speech. Because Peter has just worked a wondrous deed, his testimony about the source of his power is credible. The risen Jesus is truly working through him.

Out of ignorance

Peter uses a title for God that is foundational to Jewish belief. God entered into a distinctive relationship with Abraham and his descendants. This same God raised one of those descendants, Jesus, from the dead, even after his own people facilitated his execution. Note, the Greek word for *servant* can also be translated *child* (v.13).

Peter explains that God's chosen people rejected Jesus because they didn't understand who he was and why he acted as he did (v.17). God had anticipated their initial response (v.18).

Another chance

Peter declares that God will overlook the people's rejection if they seek forgiveness and accept Jesus. Peter helps them to understand what has happened and to accept Jesus just as Jesus once helped him (see the Gospel reading).

LUKE 24:35-48

Reading closely

1. Why might the disciples have gathered?
2. What are the disciples discussing when Jesus appears?
3. How do the disciples react?
4. Why do the disciples think they see a ghost?
5. How does Jesus reassure them?
6. If you were in the room, how would you react?
7. How does Jesus help his disciples understand what has happened?
8. What do you think it was like for the disciples to *have their minds opened* (v.45)?
9. What does Jesus want his disciples to do?
10. What all have the disciples witnessed?
11. What is the purpose of Jesus' visit?
12. How would you have described this encounter with the risen Jesus?
13. What elements in this story are similar to the Mass?

Living the word

14. Are you ever afraid of Jesus?
15. Imagine that Jesus appears to you.
 - a. How does he seem to you?
 - b. How do you react?
 - c. What do you say to each other?
16. How can you be a *witness of these things* (v.48)?

THE GOSPEL READING

Flesh and bone

In their different ways all four Gospel-writers try to help people believe in something that seems unbelievable: the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

Luke shows that Jesus' risen state isn't a purely spiritual experience, a mass hallucination, or mere wishful thinking.

- Jesus has hands and feet; ghosts don't
- Jesus is *flesh and bone*, a biblical expression for *being human*
- Jesus eats food

The risen Jesus is part of time and space, but he is no longer subject to it. He has triumphed over death and is now lord of all, both of the spiritual and the material.

In fulfillment of the scriptures

The disciples are happy but confused. They didn't expect Jesus to return like this, and they don't have a frame of reference for making sense out of his transformed state. Jesus must help them understand.

Our Old Testament doesn't contain verse after verse of detailed information about Jesus. If it did, more people would have accepted Jesus and the disciples would have been waiting for him to appear. There are, however, major themes running through the Jewish scriptures that Jesus embodied.

- God wants to save all of creation and for us to live in peace
- God overcomes every obstacle to his will
- God favors those in need and those who act justly and with love
- God acts within human history in ways that often surprise and startle us

Witnesses

Christian faith is based on historical events. These events were first spoken about then written down so that later generations could be sure that they had a credible basis for their faith. In the Jewish tradition, testimony was deemed true if at least two men gave it. Far more people witnessed the events that form the historical core of Christian faith.

PRAYER

by Origen

Heavenly Father,
 may the Lord Jesus touch our eyes,
 as he did those of the blind.
 Then we shall begin to see
 in visible things those which are invisible.
 May he open our eyes to gaze not on present
 realities but on the blessings to come.
 May he open the eyes of our heart to
 contemplate God in Spirit,
 through Jesus Christ the Lord,
 to whom belong power and glory
 through all eternity. Amen.