

Jesus Opened Their Minds to Understand the Scriptures

SUNDAY 14 APRIL 2024 GOSPEL READING: Luke 24:35-48

35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. 36 As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. 37 But they were startled and frightened and supposed that they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

Meditation: Aren't we like the apostles? We won't believe unless we can see with our own eyes. The Gospel accounts attest to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus from the grave. Jesus goes to great lengths to assure his disciples that he is no mere ghost or illusion. He shows them the marks of his crucifixion and he explains how the Scriptures foretold his death and rising.

Jerome (347-420 AD), an early church bible scholar, comments:

"As he showed them real hands and a real side, he really ate with his disciples; really walked with Cleophas; conversed with men with a real tongue; really reclined at supper; with real hands took bread, blessed and broke it, and was offering it to them... Do not put the power of the Lord on the level with the tricks of magicians, so that he may appear to have been what he was not, and may be thought to have eaten without teeth, walked without feet, broken bread without hands, spoken without a tongue, and showed a side which had no ribs." (From a *letter to Pammachius against John of Jerusalem* 34)

The door to heaven and key to paradise is through the cross

The centrality of the Gospel message is the cross - but fortunately it does not stop there. Through the cross Jesus defeated our enemies - death and Satan and won pardon for our sins. His cross is the door to heaven and the key to paradise. The way to glory is through the cross. When the disciples saw the risen Lord they disbelieved for joy! How can death lead to life, the cross to victory? Jesus shows us the way and he gives us the power to overcome sin and despair, and everything else that would stand in the way of his love and truth. Just as the first disciples were commissioned to bring the good news of salvation to all the nations, so, we, too, are called to be witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to all who live on the face of the earth. Do you witness the joy of the Gospel to those around you?

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *The Easter Alleluia*, by Augustine of Hippo, 354-430 A.D.

"We are praising God now, assembled as we are here in church; but when we go on our various ways again, it seems as if we cease to praise God. But provided we do not cease to live a good life, we shall always be praising God. You cease to praise God only when you swerve from justice and from what is pleasing to God. If you never turn aside from the good life, your tongue may be silent but your actions will cry aloud, and God will perceive your intentions; for as our ears hear each other's voices, so do God's ears hear our thoughts. " (excerpt from commentary on *Psalms 148*)

OPENING PRAYER: - Lord Jesus, open our minds to understand the Scriptures that we may fully comprehend the truth of your word. Anoint us with your power and give us joy and boldness to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER: - Lord, we pray for the victims of the recent Cyclone in Australia that those effected can rebuild their lives and homes after the forces of nature have turned against them. Also, the wars overseas that these people have the strength to go on and the leaders of these countries find a peaceful resolution to the wars. **Amen.**