

Third Sunday of Easter : April 18th 2021 LK 24:35-48

During this Easter season, in addition to celebrating all that Christ did for us, we are also reminded of how His sacrifice impacts our lives. The knowledge of His sacrifice should not only affect our minds but also our hearts, changing how we live. With that in mind, our readings today call us to reflect on the necessary changes we must make as disciples of Christ.

Our first reading reminds us that we are called to conversion. St. Peter recounts that man put Christ to death as he stated, “You denied the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.” Although many were unaware of what they were doing at that time, many became aware through the preaching of the disciples. St. Peter was calling those individuals to repent and transform their lives.

Through sin, we betray Jesus once again. It is like saying, “crucify Him!” Sometimes we deliberately turn away from Jesus out of pride and selfishness, and other times, we are not even aware of the gravity of our sin. Whether we know our weaknesses or are ignorant to them, let us ask God to reveal the areas of our lives in which we are betraying Him — maybe through addiction, materialism, and how we spend our money or time and putting things above God. And let us ask for the grace to repent and change our ways.

In our Gospel, we are reminded that Jesus should be the central point in our lives. This passage begins with two disciples realizing Jesus had just appeared to them. They had previously spent a day with Him without recognizing His appearance.

We can learn a valuable lesson from these disciples. To recognize Jesus’ appearances in our lives, we need to know Him. And the best way to know the Lord is to spend time with Him. It can start with just ten minutes of quiet prayer a day and increasing that time week by week. We might begin by reading Scripture, the lives of the Saints, or even a decade of the Rosary. Yet the goal should be to carve out a specific time or times each day, in a quiet space, for just you and the Lord. As these disciples spent time with Jesus, it says, “He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Through building a routine of prayer and intentionally working on our relationship with Jesus, God will help us better understand His Word and all that He is calling us to do.

As the disciples mentioned in our Gospel, they recognized it was Jesus in the breaking of the bread. We can also better know the Lord through the sacraments, most especially the Holy Mass. The Eucharist is Jesus Himself — Body, Blood Soul, and Divinity. What better way to grow in intimacy with Christ than to receive Him as frequently as possible or to go into the church and talk to Him in front of the Blessed Sacrament? As we make Jesus the center of our lives — through prayer and the sacraments — we will be able to recognize Him in day-to-day moments.

The end of our Gospel reminds us that we are called to evangelize. The disciples in Jesus’ time were witnesses of His life, death, and resurrection. It was their duty to spread it to the ends of the earth. We are also witnesses. We were not physically at Calvary, but we are witnesses of the truth of our faith and the effects that Christ has on our lives. We are called to share the goodness and love He pours out on us to all those we meet. Very simply, we are called to be evangelists by the way we live our lives.

As we are still in the midst of this Easter season, let us take some time to think about what Christ did for us and the changes we should make in our daily lives to help us grow closer to Him.