

Fr. Rudy's Reflections
The Third Sunday of Easter
April 14, 2024

Resurrection to Life

My Sisters and Brothers in the Risen Lord,

We seem to live in a world of opinion-based solutions, quick fixes, and egocentrism, so we tend to look at things through a lens of our own making. We may ask ourselves in moments of stress or hesitation: what is real, what is fiction, and what should I hold onto? Our lives are often grounded in disarray and untenable time constraints, and we appreciate those things that are concrete and stable. We claim, however, to be a people who “walk by faith and not by sight,” but in stressful times, we often do not take the road less traveled, less worldly, to find our peace. We cannot see the light ahead, even though its glimmer beckons us forth. . . We roll the dice and take a path we think will give us what we need, what others might do, or what has temporarily sustained us before.

Today is the Third Sunday of Easter, and we are presented with a Gospel that many consider a masterpiece within a masterpiece. It is an excerpt from Luke 24 that describes Jesus after meeting two disciples on the road to Emmaus and appearing to his apostles, all together, for the first time. As the apostles learn about the disciples encountering Jesus on the road, he enters their midst, and they circle around him. It is a scene of great joy, astonishment, and perhaps fear, for he is now in front of them with these calming words: “Peace be with you.” Imagine this startling scene and how these men must have reacted. In this heightened anxiety, is it any surprise their first thought would be he was an apparition—not real, not alive, a ghost?

Jesus's resurrection following his suffering and crucifixion was indeed real and the culmination of all that was promised by God throughout Hebrew Scripture. With compassion, mercy, and forgiveness for all he endured, Jesus presented himself as a living, breathing human being these men could touch, see, and recognize that everything had now been made good. In a very literal way, Jesus commissions these men, and truly all of us, to be his witness, to go forth and be like him, loving God, each other, and ourselves. He has stated: “Peace I leave you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives” (John 14:27). We as his followers must believe he is the One who can transform lives for the greater good. It is with loving hearts we come to know this path, and if we become hesitant, we must ask him to guide us there. It is in his life, death, and resurrection all things are possible, and through his grace, we will find the ultimate peace and joy.

“Faith always needs to go back to Galilee, to reawaken its first love for Jesus and his call: to remember him, to turn back to him with all our mind and all our heart. . . Otherwise, ours is a ‘museum’ faith, not an Easter faith. Jesus is not a personage from the past; he is a person living today. We do not know him from history books; we encounter him in life. Today, let us remember how Jesus first called us, how he overcame our darkness, our resistance, our sins, and how he touched our hearts with his word.”—Pope Francis, Easter Vigil Homily 2019

Yours in Christ,
Fr. Rudy