



1 John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
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The earliest days of the church in the post-crucifixion and resurrection period are filled with deep sadness and grief, confusing accounts of apparitions, fear, astonishment, and joy.

Rapidly succeeding apparition events reveal the overwhelming number of emotions that the disciples go through as they try to make sense of what is going on with Jesus whom they have seen dead and buried and now in their midst on several occasions.

In today's gospel, Jesus appears again to his disciples locked in a room. They are discussing the women's early morning empty tomb story (Lk 24:10), an (alleged) apparition of Jesus to Peter at the tomb (Lk 24:12.34), and a second apparition to two disciples on their way to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-33).

Jesus appears and offers peace. But they are startled and terrified. Is this because a) they know the law of nature: he *shows up* after death, b) they can't believe their eyes: he resembles a *ghost*, c) they can't believe their ears: he offers *peace* after they abandoned and reneged on him, or d) all of the above? Jesus is not out for vengeance. He hasn't come to punish but to embrace and wash sinners with his forgiving love. He wants us to do the same and teaches us by doing it.

A man buys a parrot and brings him home. But the parrot starts insulting him and gets really nasty, so the man picks him up and

tosses him into the freezer to teach him a lesson. He hears the bird squawking for a few minutes, but all of a sudden the parrot is quiet. The man opens the freezer door, the parrot walks out, looks up at him, and says, "I apologize for offending you, and I humbly ask your forgiveness."

The man says, "Well, thank you. I forgive you." The parrot then says, "If you don't mind my asking, what did the chicken do?"

Jesus reassures them and invites them to look at and touch his hands and feet. They couldn't grasp the significance of that until he "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures." Jesus went on to explain that his earthly end recapped all that he had lived among them. He had told them that evil would unleash all its power in the attempt to eliminate him.

The scars in Jesus' body, earned when he gave life to all of us, **are not blotted out by the resurrection** (John 20:27). They are signs of his love and dedication to God and to us. They are **signs of faithfulness, endurance, and victory**.

Consider the wounds! Such prodigal love will allow us to understand and impress a fundamental truth on our minds and hearts: **we are children of God** (see 1 John 3:1)! Ponder on this.

But they still look confused. So, Jesus asks them for something to eat. Jesus brings their attention to something more acceptable and within their grasp of understanding of what is normal.

There seems to be a **calming and reassuring element in eating food together**. Enemies soften in the experience of human need and vulnerability. Is that why food deprivation is used as a weapon of war so enemies will not see each other's humanity? As recently as last summer, 91 UN Member States (including

Israel) signed a U.S.-led joint communiqué pledging action to end the use of food as a weapon of war.¹

After Jesus eats some fish, he explains the Scriptures to them regarding the suffering of the Messiah, his Resurrection, and the message about repentance and forgiveness (Lk 24:45-48).

God's ways are not our ways! **Jesus breaks the cycle of violence in his body.** The scapegoat mechanism stops with him.

He doesn't play the victim and doesn't bow to means of violence but affirms that this is **the path of the Messiah (and his followers): suffering and resurrection, repentance and forgiveness** (Lk 24:45-47).

What does this tell us today as we see an overabundance of revenge acted out in Gaza and the ferocity of death-dealing evil in Ukraine and other countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, and Syria — to name only a few of far too many?

Jesus told his disciples to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins — that is, embracing a new vision of life. He wanted them to believe exactly what his cross revealed: The powers of oppression, hatred, and clinging to dominating power will fail not only in the end, but every time an innocent person stands up to them. That is why Jesus and his followers are so dangerous to the "great powers."

And then he adds: **“You are witnesses of these things.”** (v. 48)

The disciples have seen the pattern and are called to witness to it **not as reporters but as practitioners.** It's not enough for us to tell what Jesus has done. We become credible when we follow

¹ <https://usun.usmission.gov/ninety-one-countries-sign-u-s-led-joint-communicue-condemning-the-use-of-food-as-a-weapon-of-war/>

closely in his footsteps and do what he did: Christians need to **suffer** and **rise, repent** of what we do to him in the least of these, and experience and proclaim his **forgiveness**.

At the thought of the Resurrection, we may display the same kind of disbelief and wonder the first disciples experienced.

But the message is very simple: he is risen, and you can live forgiven in peace. It is also very difficult: we are called to repent, that is, reorient our lives and share forgiveness. Just as he broke the cycle of violence so must we. This brings us suffering in the short run but also life eternal with him.

When Jesus issues the call for us to follow, we can take comfort in knowing he has already accounted for our lapses of faith and lack of understanding.

The question remains: “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?” (v. 38)

Let us trust Jesus’ power to save. Amen.