

## Third Sunday of Easter (B): Living the Gift of Being Redeemed by the Lord Jesus

Acts 3:13–15, 17–19; Psalm 4:2, 4, 7–8, 9; 1 John 2:1–5a; Luke 24:35–48

Dear friends and family of CCST,

We joyfully sing our alleluia as we continue to proclaim the joy of Easter. We acknowledge that salvation has been bestowed on us through the merits of Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection. While it's necessary to recognize our redemption through Jesus, it's essential to conduct our lives as being redeemed. Peter showed us the conduct of being forgiven and saved by Jesus (cf. Acts 3:13-19).

Let us reflect on these four Easter declarations of faith as we try to live as being forgiven and saved:

1. **I am the peace of Jesus.** Jesus greeted the disciples with, "Peace be with you." This greeting is more than just a simple salutation; it is a messianic blessing from the risen Lord. It is the peace that he promised his disciples before his Passion - "Peace I leave with you; the peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you" (Jn 14:27). This peace transcends earthly circumstances and is rooted in our reconciliation with God (cf. Lk 2:14; Rom 5:1).

Throughout the New Testament, the idea of peace, or *Eirēnē* in Greek, is mentioned numerous times, with a deeper meaning of harmony, well-being, and abundance. During the celebration of the Mass, we shared this peace as a sign of unity and reconciliation. Through the ordained minister, acting on behalf of Christ, the peace of the Lord is imparted to the faithful, emphasizing the connection between Christ as the head of the Church and the believers as his body. This peace reminds us of our spiritual welfare and deep connection to the Prince of Peace. Jesus desires us to be his peace to others.

2. **I am the word of Jesus.** Jesus recalled the Sacred Scriptures with his disciples to deepen their understanding and knowledge of Him. He explained to them how all that had been written in the Psalms and the prophets had been fulfilled in Him (Luke 24:44-53; John 2:22). By recalling the Scriptures, the disciples now see the connections between the Old Testament prophecies and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They joyfully speak and tell the story of their encounter with Jesus.

Similarly, our comprehension of Jesus is enhanced when we commit ourselves to studying and reflecting upon the Bible. Every Sunday, Liturgy provides readings from the Old and New Testaments; they remind us of God's ceaseless redemption plan throughout history. Diving deep into the Scriptures lets us deepen our understanding of who Jesus is and His message in our lives. St. Jerome, renowned for translating most of the Bible into Latin, once declared that "ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ." As followers of Christ, every encounter with the Bible brings us face-to-face with Him—whosoever adheres to His word will find God's love perfected within them.

3. **Jesus is my food.** His presence in shared meals is recurring throughout his appearances to his disciples (cf. Jn 21:5; Lk 24:41-42). Despite embodying a glorified body, free from earthly limitations such as time and space, Jesus still desires food. "Have you anything here to eat?" He asked his disciples an unusual request. Jesus, who was dead and buried, now stood among them with an appetite for food.

Imagine the experience of sharing a meal with one who was dead and now has risen. Yet the Lord is no ghost; he is as real as the disciples. He has risen and returned to share in their lives. It holds profound significance in the Easter narrative. Our Lord breaks down the divisions between heaven and earth, life and death. He is making his risen life present and accessible by sharing it with them by the "breaking of bread." The disciples must have been joyful seeing their Lord break bread with them as we are in the Holy Mass. Like them, we would witness more awe-inspiring instances of the living Christ as we follow his commandments — to break bread together and drink from his life-giving chalice.

"Have you anything here to eat?" Our response? A resounding yes! Yes, Lord, we have something to eat — your risen life veiled through bread and wine, and through consecration, they become your Body and Blood — the heavenly food you bestowed on us! We respond to Jesus' invitation to an intimate communion with him. We become partakers in his divine life.

Our offerings during the Holy Mass—prayers, ministries, and monetary contributions—have significant meaning. They symbolize our response to the Lord, who has given himself generously and entirely to us.

4. **Jesus has sent me.** Jesus told his disciples that they were to be his witnesses. Jesus commissioned his disciples to become His witnesses in spreading His teachings - a command passed down through generations within the Church (Acts 1:6-12). It is what the Church is doing for all the Catholic faithful. After every Mass, we are reminded of our mission: "Go, you are sent" (cf. Rom 10:15). This dismissal rite reminds us that the Church is in a state of mission, that she exists to evangelize, and all of her faithful participate her life of mission. Every baptized Christian has a mission!

Let us live the gift of being forgiven and saved by our Lord Jesus. God's blessings flow through us like a river when we own and witness these four declarations of faith.

Easter blessings!

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