

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
Year B: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; Ps 4; 1 Jn 2:1-5a; Lk 24:35-48
April 18, 2021
Fr. David Pignato

In the opening prayer for this Third Sunday of Easter, we prayed that we rejoice in the glory that Christ has restored to us as children of God, and we look forward with confident hope to rejoicing on the day of resurrection. This is because we know that, by rising from the dead, Christ made possible our own resurrection and a share in His own life of glory.

During this Easter season, we are celebrating the fact and the truth that Jesus *is alive*. As we just heard in the Gospel, after He rose from the dead, Jesus showed Himself to His Apostles to prove to them that it was His real body, alive again, and that He was not a ghost. When Christ rose from the dead, He began a new, glorified life that is eternal. And ever since His Ascension into Heaven, He is able to be present and alive to each of us here on earth. As the Church prays during Easter, “He never ceases to offer himself for us but defends us and ever pleads our cause . . . : he is the sacrificial Victim who dies no more, the Lamb, once slain, who lives forever” (Preface III of Easter).

Our Christian faith takes on a whole new intensity and effectiveness in our lives when we are convinced and aware that Christ is truly alive and that He is present and near to us at every moment. We can go through life thinking that Christ is Someone we will meet only later when this life is over, or that He is Someone we can know here and now, because He is close to us and offering to help us in this life. And one way to foster this conviction that Christ is alive and present to us is to spend time with Christ in prayer, by withdrawing a bit from the world around us, to give Christ our full attention – to speak to Him about our lives, to be reminded of His words and His teachings, and to seek His direction and guidance for whatever we might face in life.

Here’s how one spiritual author describes the invitation from Christ to spend time with Him in prayer: Jesus says to us, “Come away from the blind pursuit of creatures, from all the plans your busy brain evolves for your present and future pleasures, from the frivolous distractions it clings to. Come away from the pettiness and the meanness of your everyday life, from the grudges, the jealousies, the unhealed enmities that set your imagination throbbing. Come away from the cares and [worries] about [tomorrow] that seem so urgent, your heavy anxieties

about the world's future and your own, [which are both] so short ... and so uncertain. Come away into the wilderness of prayer, where my love will follow you and my hand hold you; learn to live, with the innermost part of your soul, with all your secret aspirations, with all the centre of your hopes and cares, in that supernatural world which can be yours now, which must be yours hereafter" (Ronald Knox, *Pastoral and Occasional Sermons*, 245-46).

It's in prayer with Christ that we are invited to start living here and now the new, supernatural life of glory that Christ won for us by His death and Resurrection. Eternal life is not only something that waits for us in the future. It's also something that can begin here in time, if we start to live now as Christ taught us. And, it's in times of quiet prayer that we hear Christ speak to us, when He reminds us of His teachings and His words in the Gospel which offer guidance and direction in our lives.

This is why we offer time each week here at St. Julie's for Adoration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Adoration gives time to withdraw a bit from the busyness of the world, to set aside distractions, and to sit in quiet and peaceful reverence, in order to focus on Christ and speak with Him from the heart, and listen to any guidance He might give, by calling to mind the words He spoke to the world. The words of Christ in the Gospel are "*the words of eternal life*" (Jn 6:68), and they apply to each of our lives. They are words to live by, but we often need quiet time to remember them and to focus on how they apply to us.

So, during this Easter season, we invite you to consider spending time in Adoration, to enter "the wilderness of prayer" and the supernatural world that is always all around us. It's in our prayer with Christ that He will teach us how to begin living now, here in time, the new, glorified life that He won for us by His rising from the dead. For, Christ is truly alive. He has risen, as He said He would. Alleluia!