

3rd Sunday of Easter, jr. B, Xavier Church, Acts 3, 13-15. 17-19; Ps. 4, 2.4.7.9; 1 Jn. 2, 1-5a; Lk. 24, 35-48

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Dear brothers and sisters, in the book of Acts of the Apostles, Peter speaks to the people. He confronts his listeners with the truth that they have crucified Jesus, the author of life. Yet Peter's tone does not sound reproachful; he adds that they have acted in ignorance. Ignorant of who Jesus really was. Ignorant also of His resurrection, for although He had announced this several times, even His disciples, including Peter himself, had not at first understood what this meant.

Only gradually this became clear to them, as the evangelist Luke testifies. At first the disciples think they see a ghost. But it is not a ghost or a phantom that they see, but an apparition of Jesus, showing the wounds of the crucifixion on his hands and feet. He even eats a piece of fish in their presence. Yet this is not a return of Jesus to normal, biological life either. Jesus has transcended natural death: He no longer dies.

That is exactly what this encounter with the risen Lord is about: an encounter that reveals the immortality of the soul in a risen and glorified body. This mystery is not only about Jesus' soul, but it is about the soul of all of us, since we all exist in Him. And we have an immortal soul.

In our Creed, we always express our faith in the resurrection of the body. This point of faith has a particularly rich meaning, which unfortunately is nowadays all too often ignored or denied. The point is that the human body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us. Therefore, it is good that we honour God with our bodies, in preparation for our personal encounter with Him. We do this in particular by participating in the Eucharist and the other sacraments in a worthy manner. But we also do this by treating our bodies in a balanced way in our daily lives, without the exaggerated attention to physical matters, which is quite common today, but also without neglecting the body in relation to the spirit. The covid pandemic has made a number of things clear to us in this regard. For example, that it is strange that all these years we have allowed tens of thousands of people into our cities, tourists of whom many come here mainly to use drugs or to visit the red light district. More and more municipalities no longer want this. We are forced to face the facts in this epidemic. Our bodies often give off signals which can help to keep our bodies and minds in a healthy balance.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Apostle John writes in his first letter that his intention is that we should not sin, by keeping God's commandments. In this passage we can see a clear allusion to Jeremiah's prophecy that the Lord will make a new covenant

with those who believe, by writing His law within us, in our hearts. Then every believer will know the Lord. And the Lord will forgive our sins when we call upon Him and repent.

After his resurrection, Jesus speaks to his disciples about proclaiming the Gospel among all peoples. Pope Francis has stressed that this year is in a special way dedicated to the proclamation of the Gospel in our families. The wonderful Biblical stories and events should be made known to children. Parents and grandparents play an important role in doing so. Their catechesis should be encouraged through the accompaniment by priests, deacons and catechists. It can be so enriching for children when they hear about God who loves them and who has sent his own Son to save the world.

The Apostle Peter calls his audience to conversion, especially to acceptance of the faith in the Risen Lord. When people start to discover the this central mystery of the Christian faith, this can give new meaning to their lives. When we, too, truly grasp the meaning of the mystery of the resurrection, then it becomes a great source of joy for us too. Amen.