



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

### **3rd Sunday of Easter Year B**

#### ***He is risen***

Readings: *Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19, Ps 4, 1 John 2: 1-5, Luke 24: 35-48*

A scientist or an historian would hope for much more information. Copious notes, accounts, reports in forensic detail would be the order of the day. What we have is just a few short pages of information on the most extraordinary event in human history – the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Indeed the earliest Christian communities did not even have these. Instead they had the living testimony of the Apostles and those who had attended the tumultuous events of that extraordinary Passover in Jerusalem in the governorship of Pontius Pilate and the high priesthood of Caiaphas.

What emerges from the brief Gospel accounts, an underpinning summary and edited highlights of the Apostolic witness, is dizzying series of events which would not only turn the lives of Jesus' followers upside down but continue to have that effect on the world and all who would, over the next two millennia, encounter the Risen Lord.

We are confronted, in the wake of torture, kangaroo court, public humiliation and grisly death, with the apparent defeat of the Messianic enterprise. If this was the culmination of God's plan for the salvation of

Fallen Man then it has been undone on the Calvary and the chief of the Fallen Angels has taken his final bitter revenge on the one true God whose throne he covets.

Hiding in upper rooms, behind locked doors, on the run from the Holy City, we encounter the defeated, disappointed and terminally dispirited disciples. They have no reason to imagine that Jesus' cry from the Cross means that He has accomplished His purpose and died for our sins. To the weary and frightened disciples, 'It is finished' means precisely that. It's over. Goodnight Vienna.

What they (and we) encounter next is beyond extraordinary. An empty tomb. A vision of angels. The tear clouded eyes of the Magdalen who sees the 'gardener' resolve into Jesus. The disappointed disciples who walk with a brilliant stranger who reveals Himself in the breaking of the Bread. The sceptic who touches the wounds of Christ and acknowledges His Lordship. The terrified huddle that sees the Risen One appear in the room behind locked doors and give direct evidence of the Resurrection of the Body, the translation of our humanity into another and eternal dimension. The fishermen who reconvene on the Galilee shoreline and are recommissioned for the Gospel work of the Church which will carry the Word of Life and the Sacramental Presence into the four corners of the world as the Church Catholic, the 'called' for the salvation of the 'universe'.

We encounter a mystery. The Risen Body of Christ is a continuity of His assumed humanity. The wounds may be seen and touched. He eats with His followers. We see in this revelation one of the signal pointers of our destiny. The uniqueness of the person is maintained in the Risen Life. We are not

absorbed or recycled as someone else. The relationship with God and each other is utterly personal. God has revealed Himself as 'I am who I am'. Man can respond 'we are who we are' but in need of that purgation and purification that is alone available in Christ, in His death and Resurrection.

But if there is reassuring continuity the Risen Christ also witnesses to a radical discontinuity. Here is a body that can be disguised and revealed in the same journey, obscured by sorrow then recognised in the calling of our name in the light of the dawn in the same garden. Here is a body that can appear behind locked doors and set people free. Here is a body that can be in different places unconstricted by time or geography. Humanity, redeemed by the Godhead, is entering a new dimension.

These few pages of divine and human history are enough. They are enough because they are but the origin and entry point of the pilgrimage of faith. In the earliest weeks and years, the dispirited disciples, now fuelled by the Holy Spirit, will take on the world as witnesses to the greatest miracle of God's love in Christ. The fearful will be transformed by faith. They will, often at the cost of their lives, spend the rest of their days walking into strange and hostile cities to proclaim the Gospel of the Risen Christ and, by sacramental grace, establish His Presence amidst the demonic clatter of pagan cultures.

The brief tumultuous account of the written Word of the Gospel of the Risen One is foundational witness. The billions of pages of confirmation added since are written in the lives of the Faithful down all the ages. If someone wants to meet a disciple who has encountered the Risen Lord, she should not have far to look. If someone wants to encounter Jesus we, of

all people, should be able to lead him into the Presence – here, now,  
everywhere and always in the Breaking of the Bread.

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