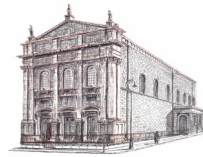




PARISH OF ST. AGATHA 1

17TH/18TH APRIL 2021



Fr. Brendan Kealy Adm.: 087 9117575 Office:
Tel:018554078, Mr John Kelly: Chairperson Parish Pastoral Council

Jesus I Trust in You E-mail : office@stagathasparish.ie Website: www.stagathasparish.ie

POPE FRANCIS: CHRISTIANITY IS RELATIONSHIP, CARE AND JOY.

On the Third Sunday of Easter Pope Francis reflects on how being a Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal, it is the living relationship with Him. Pope Francis reflected on the Gospel (Luke 24:35-48) which tells of how the Resurrected Jesus presents himself in the midst of the group of disciples in the Cenacle in Jerusalem and greets them saying: "Peace to you!" The disciples are frightened and believe "that they saw a spirit". Then Jesus shows them His Bodily Wounds and says: "See My hands and My feet, that it is I myself; handle Me", and to convince them, He asks for food and eats it before their astonished eyes. The Pope explained that three very tangible verbs characterise this Gospel passage: they are *looking*, *touching* and *eating*. He said these are all verbs that reflect our individual and community life and describe actions that "can give joy to a true encounter with the living Jesus."

LOOKING AND TOUCHING THE WOUNDS

Looking is not only seeing because it involves intention and will." "For this reason, it is one of the verbs of love. A mother and father look at their child; lovers look at each other; *Looking* is a first step against indifference, against the temptation to turn the face before the difficulties and sufferings of others," he said. *Touching* is also a verb of love because love calls for closeness, contact, the sharing of life. The Pope said that "by inviting the disciples to touch Him, to verify that he is not a spirit, Jesus indicates to them and to us that the relationship with Him and with our brothers and sisters cannot remain "at a distance", at the level of a gaze." The Good Samaritan did not limit himself to looking at that man whom he found half dead along the road: he bent down, treated his wounds, loaded him on his mount and took him to the inn." It is the same with Jesus, the Holy Father continued: "loving him means entering a vital, tangible communion with Him.

EATING: NOURISHMENT NECESSARY TO LIVE

The third verb, *to eat*, clearly expresses our humanity in its most natural indigence, that is, our need to nourish ourselves in order to live. Pope Francis reflected on when we eat together, with family or friends, it "also becomes an expression of love, of communion, of celebration." "How often the Gospels present us Jesus who experiences this convivial (friendly/enjoyable) dimension! Even as the Risen One, with His disciples. To the point that the Eucharistic Banquet has become the emblematic (symbol) sign of the Christian community," he noted.

A LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Pope Francis concluded his catechesis explaining that this Gospel passage tells us that Jesus is not a "spirit", but a living Person:

"Being Christian is not first of all a doctrine or a moral ideal; it is the living relationship with Him, with the Risen Lord: we look at him, we touch him, we are nourished by Him and, transformed by his Love, we look at, touch and nourish others as brothers and sisters." (Vatican News/Linda Bordoni).

JESUS OPENED THEIR MINDS TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE

Jesus comes to us not only in the form of Holy Eucharist but also in the form of the Word in Holy Scripture. To receive Him physically in Holy Communion, before the lockdown, we had to open our mouths. Very few Christians, when receiving the Word in the readings and Gospel, open their minds. The venial sin of distraction overpowers them or they are not interested in what Jesus is saying to them in Mass. The Priest is canonically obliged to be open for the Holy Spirit to preach through him in Mass, but many don't listen and complain. The Priest, who is in the Person of Christ on the Altar, is often used as the scapegoat, because the complainers are projecting their own dislike and annoyance of having to be in the presence of God for too long. They cannot wait for Mass to end. They have allowed their senses to be hijacked by the Devil, who first introduced this sinful pattern with Judas, who thought the Last Supper Mass would never end, so he could get out and return to what he liked doing best: betraying and offending God.

REPENT FOR OUR SINS AND MAKE A PROMISE TO CHANGE

In today's Gospel (Lk 24: 35-48), Jesus tells us clearly that *penance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name*, because that is the mission of the Church. The Gospel story today begins in Jerusalem, with the two disciples telling their colleagues of how they met a Man, as they walked on the road to Emmaus, and how they only recognised Him, as the Risen Jesus, in the breaking of the Bread. Suddenly Jesus Himself appeared to them all in the Upper Room. The fact that He came suddenly, although the doors were locked, indicates that His presence is now of a different kind. The first act that Jesus performs in the presence of the disciples, who abandoned and betrayed Him, was to wish them Peace. That act of Mercy and Forgiveness is the healing remedy for all our souls. To forgive is to have Peace always. Can I carry that message today to even one other person? The disciples are terrified and think they are seeing a ghost. *What are you afraid of?* Jesus asks them and He shows them His pierced hands and feet. They are overcome with great Joy and Peace.

FAITH OPENS OUR MINDS TO SEE BEYOND THIS WORLD

Jesus pushes their disbelief a bit further and asks for food to eat, in order to help them believe that He is truly risen in Body and not a ghost. He is still in the world but in a very different way from before Good Friday. *Jesus opens the minds of the disciples* to understand that the Messiah, the Chosen One, who Moses and all of the Prophets spoke about, over thousands of years, is actually Him who stands before them in Body. He uses Faith to open their minds to believe. In every Mass we are spiritually brought back in time to the Life, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, while still remaining in the present time. We are His new disciples and He opens our minds to His presence in the Readings and Gospel - if we are prepared to listen attentively - in the spirit of Faith. To open our minds also entails us believing that Heaven, Purgatory and Hell exist. He teaches us to believe that if we want to go to Heaven, then we must have entered into a living, personal relationship and Holy Communion with the Holy Trinity, while living on earth. In Mass, Jesus proclaims the Truth from the Table of the Word and then that Word becomes Flesh on the Altar Table of the Eucharist. Do we ever pray for Jesus to open our minds to understand Scripture more deeply?

THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD

At the Consecration of the Mass, as Jesus is elevated and exalted, we are all at the foot of the Cross in Calvary, represented by St. John, with Mary, witnessing the Crucifixion. His function of being a sacrificial Lamb is fulfilled on the Cross. God allows the unbelieving soldier to pierce His Sacred Heart, resulting in His Body **broken open by a lance** and giving us, His disciples, the Sacraments of the Church. His Precious Blood comes forth, converting the pagan soldier and the regenerating Waters of baptism flow out of His Heart for the remission of our sins, allowing us to live by the Principles of Christ. It is our mission to preach this. Jesus is visible today in Sacramental Form where His humanity is concealed. As the Priest physically **breaks** the New Risen Body of Jesus, after the Our Father, we declare the Risen Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away our sins. We must believe and understand He comes as the Risen Christ, in the Life-Giving Sacramental Bread, at this very moment of the Mass. He stands among us and offers us His Peace. When receiving Jesus in these days of Spiritual Communion, we should be in awe, feel our hearts jump for Joy and full of Peace, allowing Him to become our spiritual Host. He truly wants to live in us and we to live in Him. How special are we in the eyes of God. A continued Easter Blessing to you all. Fr Brendan