**Deacon Steve’s Reflection on the Sunday Readings**

**April 15, 2018 – Third Sunday of Easter**

**Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19 Psalm 2: 4, 7-9**

**1 John 2: 1-5a Luke 24: 35-48**

Today’s reading from the Gospel of Luke begins with the disciples, who had seen the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus, recounting their experience before the apostles following their immediate return to Jerusalem. This mysterious occurrence had followed earlier events, beginning with the discovery of the empty tomb by Mary Magdalene and the other women. As the two disciples were sharing their story, Jesus appeared to all in the Upper Room and said, *“Peace be with you.”* At first, they thought he was a ghost, but Jesus told them, *“Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have.”* This was no apparition of hallucination; before them was the Lord in physical (albeit resurrected) form. To underscore his physical presence, Jesus asked them, *“Have you anything here to eat?”* They gave him a piece of fish and he ate it while they watched. Jesus reminded the apostles and those with them all that he had said while they walked together before his paschal sacrifice:

*“Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. And he said to them, ‘Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’”*

Our Lord, who would soon ascend to the Father, was once again commissioning his disciples to bear witness to the Gospel to all men and women. The mission was not just for a chosen few. As we heard in the second reading from the First Letter of John, *“[Christ] is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world . . . But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him.”*  Salvation was for all men and women who put their faith and trust in the Lord.

Each of us have encountered Christ in the glory of his resurrection: at Baptism; in our partaking of his Precious Body and Blood in the Eucharist; as celebrated on Easter Sunday two weeks ago, and anytime we hear the Word of God, embrace him in our hearts, and live according to his life and teachings. We are called to be disciples of the Lord, just as plainly as the first disciples were called some two thousand years ago. In our repentance of our sins and our dedication of our lives to the Lord, we are saved. In the words of Saint Peter, who boldly preached before the crowds following the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost: *“Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be wiped away.”*

Deacon Steven K. Szmutko