



## Things to Ponder

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## Third Sunday of Easter – Luke 24:35-48

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### Introduction: The Easter Story: He's Back!

On the third Sunday of Easter, we continue to hear Gospel accounts of Jesus' appearance to his disciples. This Sunday reading follows immediately after the report of Jesus' appearance to his disciples on the road to Emmaus – an event only reported in Luke's account.

Consistently in the Gospel reports of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances, Jesus always greets his disciples with the words, "Peace be with you." Peace and assurance are what they need the most for their world has been turned upside down with the death of their Master. Even as they hear Jesus' greeting of peace (and forgiveness), the disciples are still startled and terrified. *Wouldn't you be?* They are uncertain about what to make of this mysterious figure before them. Who can this be? Didn't their Master die on a cross? At first, they mistake Jesus for a ghost - for maintaining that the resurrected Jesus is a ghost is more comprehensible than believing that he is risen!

To allay their fears and doubts, Jesus invites them to personally experience his resurrected body with their human senses, to look and to touch. The figure before them is flesh and bone – still bearing the marks of the crucifixion. Only then—gradually—does peace begin to take roots in their hearts – as their fears turn to joy and amazement!

And as further proof of his glorious and risen identity, Jesus actually sits down and eats with them – a baked fish! It is interesting to note that *fish* symbolized overabundance in the Hebrew

Scriptures – a sign of the eschatological age which Jesus' resurrection has indeed ushered in. The disciples have known Jesus best through the meals that he shared with them during his public ministry. By eating with his disciples after his Resurrection, Jesus recalls all these meals – and most importantly, he recalls the Last Supper.

Luke concludes this passage with Jesus explaining his life, ministry, and resurrection in light of the Hebrew Scriptures – as well as the disciples' role in carrying out his public ministry. They are to start in Jerusalem before heading to the nations. Luke ends with this powerful sentence: "You are witnesses of these things." *In short, it is now their turn! And also our turn in 2021. Are we "up" to the challenge?*

I would invite you to take time to read and ponder the words from the *Gospel of Luke 24:35-48*.

What word or words caught your attention?

What in this passage comforted you?

What in this passage challenged you?

#### **Further Questions and Reflections:**

This passage introduces the nature of the glorified body which transcends the limits of time and space. Yet, this glorified body has continuity with the mortal one. No more can be said, but Luke wants us to know that the same destiny awaits us! “You are witnesses to these things.” All through the Resurrection stories, people come to faith by meeting Jesus – and at the same time they become witnesses to others. *How can you witness to those around you: family, employees, friends?*

The Resurrection breaks down all barriers, removes all divisions – within us, between us and others. His disciples are truly ambassadors of reconciliation in every age. *Who do I need to be reconciled with? Am I a source of unity or division? Do others encounter the power of Jesus’ resurrection through me?*

Jesus had told his disciples that, when they gathered in his name, he would be in their midst. His presence brings peace, casts out fear. *Do I let him give me his peace – or do I hide in fear?*

An ancient tradition, based not on Scripture but on a sense of their bond, is that the Risen Jesus must have appeared first to his blessed mother. *What do you think he said to her? How did she respond?*

***The Easter story: He’s back! Do I believe it? Live it?***

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