

TRINITY NEWS

Easter 1 John 20:19-31

“**T**he first day of the week”. Not the day of rest but the first day of the week. At the end of the first century and stepping into the new century Ignatius of Antioch noted the change from the massively attested 7th day, the Sabbath, to the Day of Resurrection as the primary weekly focus of Christian worship.

G.K Chesterton said that “God, who had only been a circumference was seen as a centre; and a center is infinitely small.”

One human being out of the whole concourse of humanity, a speck hidden by the mass of earth, suddenly becomes the central point of convergence for humanity.

He is only a speck, but it is a speck of dazzling light in the darkness. It is both light and life.

He stands in the midst of the disciples, this astonishing negation of death.

He brings shalom, “peace”, a peace that softens our fears and elevates our hopes beyond expectation.

He showed them his hands and his side: his wounds. This identifies him as the one from the Cross. There can be no mistake.

They are filled with unutterable joy. False smiles are worse than grim faces. Joy that cannot be fully expressed is the deepest gladness.

They actually saw him. Not just a vision, not just a man. But bearing an unmistakable identity. This was Jesus of Nazareth, bearing the stamp of heaven, standing on earth, in the midst!

He repeats and word “Shalom”. It is not just a word but a deed. It is given to them, and it streams over them like a mother oiling the pristine skin of a thriving child.

It is an apostolic blessing. They are “sent” in peace, a peace that comes from the source, the Father.

The Spirit brooded over the water at creation. Now the spirit comes as “breath”, the in-spiration of God, as it had come to the first humans.

They are given authority to give and to withhold forgiveness. They in turn passed it to us.

Forgiveness has no effect if it is not received in a spirit of peace. Forgiveness is meant to soften, to prevail against hardness. If the heart cannot forgive, then it cannot be forgiven.

The Apostle Thomas comes. He wants to touch the wounds of Christ. He craves evidence. God is not known by proofs, but by presence, and the infusion of love which stimulates faith and facilitates the mental structures of belief.

Thomas is overwhelmed by the presence of God and the luminous love in the Risen Lord. The craving for evidence falls away, and he cries out “My Lord and my God!” Apparently, he does not get to touch the wounds of the Lord, the print of nails in the hands and spear-wound in the side.

The writer then raises his gazes from the scroll and the scene he is recounting and sees us and those before and after us on a distant horizon. He recounts beautiful words of assurance from Jesus. “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

The universal human has become the universal Redeemer.

Some people will never forgive us. Don't hold your breath waiting for them! Because of Christ's love of us and the Father, the Father seems to have trouble remembering our sins! The dividing wall of hostility has been broken down as the writer of Ephesians reminds us.

Resurrection shatters the canons of reason, reassures us that our identity is secured, tells that we are loved by God; and it describes the greatest journey of all, the luminous path to God where SHALOM has the last say. Amen.

Bishop Arthur Jones

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Acts 2:14a,36-47; Psalm 116; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

TO PLAN:

Tuesday, May 3.

- Bible Study, 10am
- Bible Study, 7:15pm @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village)

Thursday, May 5.

- Midweek Eucharist, 10am, Chapel