

# TRINITY NEWS

## **Easter II Post-Resurrection Appearances: a Foretaste of Heaven.**

The first Sunday of the Easter turns the most precise reference of time in the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. Our Holy Week is built on less secure timelines! Here we have a reference to “eight days later”. We gladly step into the ‘tread’ of time traversed by those before us. At a time when biblical scholars sometimes lose sight of the *prima facie*, “on the surface” meaning of the text, and pay even less attention to the hidden meanings, I find myself entranced by what is actually there in the text. It is not so much that we are told too little, but that we are told more than we can bear. We need to ‘walk’ through the text and watch it open up beneath our gaze to guide our steps. On Easter day I spoke about two Hebrew words that were significant for Jesus and all the prophets. The Hebrew word *Dabar* means “The words we use in every day speech”. But *Dabar* also means “the lasting words of God”. The Hebrew word *Ruach* means “wind” and “breath”, and “the field of encounter with God”. It also means the “Spirit of God”. When it is combined with *Dabar* in a sacred sense, then it has great power, as at creation. It has the power to break open a tomb and raised a dead body; power to bring Jesus into a room; and the power to pour out the Spirit at Pentecost. Jesus did not walk through closed doors. The power of *Dabar/Ruach* placed him in front of the disciples in a room with locked doors.

He had the best key of all! This would open many doors of the Spirit. The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ makes Pentecost possible.

Fanny Roese lost her husband after the midnight mass at Christmas in a seaside parish where I was the Rector. She lost her mind in her grief. She used to leave the lights on at night and all the doors open for Fred to come back. It was not a safe area and she was alone. As she was a believer I used the account in John about Thomas and Jesus to comfort her. I told Fanny that if Fred wanted to come home, then just as the Lord’s resurrected body could not be blocked by locked doors, Fred could now pass through. Fanny went back to locking the doors at night. May the Lord forgive me for using the Gospels in this way!

The creative power of Spirit/Word makes all sorts of connections in the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. They are a foretaste of heaven. Within these appearances individual personalities abound. Mary Magdalene, Thomas, and Peter have stuck in the memory of the Church.

An endless repetition of our earthly experience would not be heaven. It would be an endless replay of our most hellish moments on earth as well as our most beautiful moments. Nor is heaven a bland experience of a Pollyanna world where everything is beautiful. Christ's appearances after his resurrection tell us that it is an entirely different experience, though connected to our earthly experience for the purposes of identity. There is forgiveness as we see with Peter at the lakeside; there is revelation as we see with Thomas, and there is love as we see with Mary Magdalene. The risen Christ is at the heart of God and therefore he is at the heart of heaven. We will still interact with the Christ in heaven as we have done on earth. Whenever we are close to Christ we are close to heaven. Heaven in a personal sense is all of the most perceptive moments that we have had on earth about God, other people, ourselves and the creation. We will be in the presence of the Heart of Creation. We already are in that presence. Heaven will soon take up our personal stuff and translate it into a lasting experience of Shalom. There is no lasting Shalom on earth.

Word/Spirit brought Jesus into a room on Easter day and eight days later. Thomas apparently does not touch the risen Jesus before he blurts out, "My Lord and my God". That room was heaven on earth for a few moments while Jesus was in it. Thomas was looking for evidence, but what came out of his mouth was at the prompting of the Word/Spirit that had brought Jesus into the room. Watch Jesus 'walking' around in his resurrection appearances and there you see the traces of heaven. Watch and listen to the way he deals with people in those appearances and you will see the way in which he will restore our heart and make us participants in the Shalom of God that we call heaven.

Bishop Arthur Jones

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## **THIS WEEK:**

Monday, Apr. 16th

- *Vestry Mtg, 6:30pm, Rectory*

Tuesday, Apr. 17th

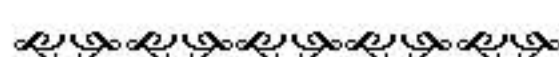
- *Bible Study, 10:00am*
- *Group Discussion @ the Tutton's (#3 Sta. Potenciana, Urdaneta Village), 7:30pm*

Thursday, Apr. 19th

- *Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel*

Saturday, Apr. 21st

- *Melvin Bautista's Ordination to the Diaconate, 9:00am.*
- *ECW Gen. Membership Mtg, 2:00pm, Parish Hall*



## **NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:**

Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 98; 1 John 1:1-2:2; Luke 24:36b-48