

## **Homily For Tuesday of the Second Week of Easter - Year I**

### **St Peter's 8:30am/7:00pm Masses - April 18, 2023**

**Acts 4:32-37** "With great power the Apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

**Psalms 93:1-5** "The Lord is king. He is robed in majesty. He has established the world."

**John 3:7-15** "If you do not believe me about earthly things, how can you believe about heavenly things?"

### **Water and the Spirit**

#### **Introduction**

Book smart. That's what people would say about someone who achieved very high grades in school. They are book smart but not very smart in life. That was a severe criticism, intended to put the high achievers down or, more accurately, to bring them down. I always thought that was a little unfair but I didn't say much against it, so that is kind of like going with the flow.

#### **John**

And yet, this is almost exactly what Jesus criticizes Nicodemus for. "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand? If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?" The difference is that Jesus does not want to bring Nicodemus down to earth. He wants him to do the opposite. Look up. Go up. If you don't do that, you will never even get earthly things right. But, if you let the Spirit take hold of you, you will see heavenly things. Then earthly things will make more sense.

The Old Testament psalmist got it. He declares that the Lord is king. He is robed in majesty. He is of heaven. One has to spiritually be looking up to see that the Lord is robed in majesty.

Nicodemus has a heart that wants to be shown how to look up. Later, he offered a word in defense of Jesus when he was accused. Still later he helped with the embalming and burial of Jesus. Very gradually, he was being born from above.

This would be a transformation where Jesus Christ is the catalyst. He, who previously had to suffer the Crucifixion and then to be resurrected, is he who will send us God's Spirit. He who has come from above. He who has shown His power and His goodness, through His many miracles. He who always does His Father's will. He who has suffered to the last drop of blood for us. Thanks to the Spirit He will send us, we shall be able to ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven. By the Spirit we are allowed to participate of Christ's Grace and to receive the right to share the eternal glory."

## **Acts**

The Book of Acts describes a human society which is a little glimpse of the heavenly vision. It's only in Jerusalem. It's only for awhile. It's only immediately after the resurrection when the Holy Spirit was visible. In worldly terms, it was a golden age of Christianity. But worldly golden ages always pass and become part of history. This golden age was to be a sign of the kingdom to come. This is a vision into the kingdom of heaven which is for us and for all who will believe and all who will allow the Spirit to take hold of their lives and go where they have never been before.

They were of one heart and one mind. No one claimed anything as his own. That's love and friendship combined. With that heavenly vision, it was easy for those who had much to let go of their ownership of worldly goods and put them at the service of the Apostles and of the poor. This was a community living in the place where heaven and earth are joined and where heavenly priorities bring the best of worldly priorities to perfection. Nobody said, "I gave at the office." No one said, "Why don't the poor just pick themselves up by their own bootstraps." Christian teaching understands having possessions as stewardship. Everything comes from God. We are the caretakers, not the owners, of what we possess. To lay ones possessions at their feet was to give them back to Christ who gave them in the first place. That's where the Spirit wants to take us. The disciples didn't start a community based on memory of Jesus. What happened was Jesus himself. HE IS ALIVE. HE IS RISEN.

## Call To Conversion

Of course, it is the heart and soul of Jesus Christ, who is *one* with the Father, and who comes to us in the unity of the Holy Spirit, which makes us one. In the Spirit, life is always new. Good Friday showed us the worst evil that is possible on earth. But heaven itself came to earth at the resurrection, and something entirely new happened.

Being united to Christ and to one another in Christ requires two things. One is to feel the wind of the Spirit blowing through our souls. The other is to seek friendship with Christ and allow it to blow through us to the rest of the world. People will be attracted by that kind of friendship. It will encourage others to lay down their lives at the feet of Christ. That's the heaven we seek.

Many people have the right idea. Love one another, be kind, treat people with respect, honour differences rather than ridicule. There is one thing missing. It's belief in God and His animating Spirit. The more we focus on the victory and Lordship of Christ, the more will our faith be supernatural, including our charity. That's the basic doctrine of our faith. Without it, we are wandering around in the dark and in fear. With it, heaven becomes real right here. Perfect love drives out fear.

In baptism water and Spirit come together. Water and Spirit make a single thing. Baptism means to be born anew and of above. At the Eucharist, we hear the priest's words at the Eucharist as if for the first time: "Let your Spirit come down on these gifts to make them holy." Jesus calls Nicodemus to let the Spirit enter his life so that he will see what is holy and so become holy. Do you think that our Lord calls us to anything less at this Eucharist today? Let us be of one mind and heart today. Let us be taken up by the Spirit of him who gives us himself. That's heaven.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory to God.*

**Collect:** *Enable us, almighty God, to proclaim the power of the risen Lord.*

**Acts:** *The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul. Everything they owned was held in common. With great power the Apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and laid the proceeds at the Apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need..*

**Psalm:** *The Lord is king. He is robed in majesty. He has established the world. It shall never be moved. You are from everlasting. Your decrees are very sure. Holiness befits your house, O Lord.*

**John:** *Jesus said to Nicodemus: "You must be born from above." Nicodemus said: "How can these things be?" Jesus answered: Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand? If I have told you about earthy things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? The one who descended from heaven is the Son of Man. He will be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."*