

HOMILY FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN EASTER

In Easter, the Book of Acts takes the place of the Old Testament reading. The Old Testament presents the formative time for the coming of Jesus Christ. As Jesus says in the Gospel, He is the fulfilment of everything that is written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and Psalms – that’s everything in the Old Testament.

The Book of Acts presents us with the formative time for the Church. This is where we were always destined to come – to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

It is where the world is still destined to come to. Many may not acknowledge Jesus as the Saviour of the world but, they will come to that knowledge. In the meantime, we keep that faith for God’s purposes – we have a calling – to be witnesses.

The first reading pointed to the attitude of certain Israelites who didn’t want to lose power. Always operating from their own perspective and sense of power, they didn’t want to admit they were wrong; didn’t want to talk about it; simply wanted to attack and, hence, disowned the Holy One.

In fact, the second reading, is a call to the church to ‘tread lightly’. There is a tendency to make religious faith for our own purposes rather than God’s and, interestingly, we can even do it in the name of God. That becomes even more dangerous when we assume a judgement against others for then we are not keeping God’s commandments. We really have to be careful. How many countries appear in the Old Testament which were considered the enemies of Israel but, later, actually humbled Israel and brought them to their knees? These were eventually considered to have been sent by God to break down the pride of Israel.

To stop sinning is to stop taking some kind of arrogant approach that we are in the right and others are in the wrong. That Jesus Christ comes to take away the sins of the world is a statement that only God can judge. We should only seek to understand and, live together.

In the opening of the Gospel reading, we saw how the disciples who had walked on the road to Emmaus and met the resurrected Jesus had their story to tell. It was not the same story as those to whom they were speaking and who only knew the story of the empty tomb. But, then, Jesus appeared in their midst and they came to share the same story.

Everyone has a story to tell. Everyone’s story is bringing us all to a meeting with the resurrected Christ. Everyone is coming to the peace of Christ but, everyone is coming through different journeys and different experiences. Some are coming in ways which seem in this time to be against the teachings of the Church. Some are coming in ways which are obviously against the teachings of the Church. Yet, everyone is coming, otherwise the sacrifice of Jesus Christ would have been inadequate to save the world.

Albert Einstein is attributed with saying, “Life is a great tapestry. The individual is only an insignificant thread in an immense and miraculous pattern.”

Perhaps, we might question the human being as ‘insignificant’. However, the great tapestry of life is an image of how many, many, threads come together. Even, perhaps, the ‘many’ we mention in the consecration whom, Jesus will pour out his blood for: the ‘many’ John refers

to in the second reading as those for whom Jesus is the sacrifice – “Not only for us but, for the whole world.”

To take this image further, as others have said in the past, the back of the tapestry is messy. It does not reflect the image for which it exists. It is knotted and untidy. But, when you turn it around, all of those knots and untidy threads create a beautiful picture.

We are still in the formative era of life. We are still being re-created by God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is still bringing together the threads of every nation and every people. As such, we threads are still in the messiness and untidiness of this new creation. When the picture is turned around at the end, we will see how the master artist has brought everything together.