



The Collect for the Third Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened
the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
Give us such knowledge of his
presence with us,
that we may be strengthened
and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in
righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Reflections on a Theme

If there was ever any doubt that God expects the resurrection to have an impact on how we live, this week's Lectionary readings should lay it to rest. All of the readings are very clear that, because of God's work in our lives, we should live differently, and we should be witnesses to God's grace and love. The Micah reading foretells how God's reign and presence in the world will change it completely. The Psalm speaks about God's goodness to God's faithful ones, and exhorts people to turn back to God. John's letter teaches, in a clear and direct way, that following Christ has to change how we live, with sin no longer being welcome in our lives, and Christ's righteousness being the pattern by which we now live. Finally, in the Gospel reading from Luke, Jesus challenges his disciples, who are now witnessing him as the Risen One, to believe and to be witnesses that call others to repent and believe and find life in Christ. The implication this week is that, as all of these biblical witnesses teach, we are also called to become witnesses to Christ, changing our own lives to live as true Christ-followers and calling others to repent, believe, and find life.

The Old Testament Reading

Micah 4: 1-5

4In days to come
the mountain of the Lord's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.
Peoples shall stream to it,
2 and many nations shall come and say:
'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
to the house of the God of Jacob;

that he may teach us his ways
 and that we may walk in his paths.'
 For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
 and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
³ He shall judge between many peoples,
 and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;
 they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,
 and their spears into pruning-hooks;
 nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
 neither shall they learn war any more;
⁴ but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
 and no one shall make them afraid;
 for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.
⁵ For all the peoples walk,
 each in the name of its god,
 but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God
 for ever and ever.

The Second Reading

1 John 3: 1-7

³¹See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not



know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he* is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. ³And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

⁴ Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

The Gospel Reading

Luke 24: 36b-48

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'^{*} 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.^{*} 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.



44 Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.'^{*} 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah^{*} is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses^{*} of these things.



When we place the resurrection, and the teaching that accompanies it in the New Testament, in the context of Jesus' message of God's Reign, we see that the resurrection is far more than just a promise of life after death. Rather, it is a challenge to everything that brings death into our world, and a call for all people to

live differently – in ways that bring life to others.

In every family, community, and individual life, there is a longing to be fully alive – creative, contributing, filled with meaning and purpose, and connected with other people and with the earth. It is exactly this longing that Jesus' resurrection life fills. The promise of life after death only has meaning if we can know and experience something of the resurrection now – and we can when we allow Christ's message and mission to change us, shifting us away from behaviours and attitudes that bring pain, darkness and division into our neighbourhoods and communities, and

moving us toward generosity, peace-making, inclusivity, service, and advocacy for justice.



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