

About the Readings on 4.14.24

Third Sunday of Easter

Easter continues. Each year, the gospel on the third Sunday of Easter is a resurrection appearance. All three readings this Sunday contain fragments of early Christian preaching, with the Johannine emphasis quite different from that of Luke-Acts.

Acts 3:12-19

We need to beware of perpetuating the primitive Christian tendency to blame the Jews for Jesus' death. Here critical biblical studies are a welcome gift for the preacher. The most profound Christian theological understanding is that we, our sins, were the cause of Jesus' death. But we stand with Acts 3 when it calls Jesus the servant of God, the holy and righteous one, the author of life, the messiah of God, through whose suffering we are saved.

Psalm 4

Having heard Luke's message from Peter's sermon, we respond by singing Psalm 4. We hope to know the wonders that God is accomplishing in Christ, and, paradoxically, we do so with ancient Israelite religious words about sacrifices. For Christians, Christ is the sacrifice already offered to God on our behalf, and in this faith we rest secure. Along with the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, we will see the light of Christ's face.

1 John 3:1-7

The baptized live in the hope that through the power of the risen Christ, their lives will be marked by extraordinary countercultural love. Yet it is Christ, not the community itself, who is righteousness. Christian tradition has admired 1 John but balances its depiction of communal perfection with Pauline realism about sin.

Luke 24:36b-48

The risen Christ is here among us, eating with us, and that meal is part of the proclamation of the Messiah risen from the dead on the third day and offering forgiveness to all nations.