

HOMILY EASTER SUNDAY 3 B
“Making Heaven Happen Here”
(Acts 3:13-15; 17-19; 1 Jn 2:1-5; Lk 24:35-48)

When the new pastor moved into town, one of the first persons he met said, “I certainly hope that you’re not one of those narrow-minded pastors who think that only the members of your church are going to heaven.” “I’m even more narrow-minded than that,” replied the pastor, “I’m pretty sure that some of the members of my congregation are not going to make it!”

You can make heaven happen, right here and right now.

Easter is all about transformation through repentance, forgiveness and healing

The Word of God today reveals what Easter is all about, making heaven happen in the here and now. In the first reading, Peter calls people to repent and receive forgiveness of sins. In the second reading we are reminded that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. In the Gospel, Jesus is our model - abused, crucified, yet risen and radiating only unconditional forgiveness. He announces repentance and forgiveness as a movement to transform the world.

Jesus’ message, both beginning his ministry, and ending it, is similar: “Repent, believe, the Kingdom is near;” and “Proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins.” So, Christian life, Easter and resurrection is all about forgiving as Jesus forgave; receiving that forgiveness, and changing so that we will never sin that way again – truly making heaven happen in the here and now. Resurrection is all about transformation through forgiveness and healing.

Our old way of life is all too familiar: fight or flight. When hurt, we either fight (name calling, violent reaction, swearing) or flee (avoidance, repression, blocking out or medicating the pain). We survive by playing roles and abiding by the unwritten rules of not talking, not trusting and not feeling.

The new way of life, the life of Easter, leads us to let go of those roles and turn around those unwritten rules. We can start remembering, feeling; trusting, talking. We can now go through the pain with Jesus who forgives our wrong-doing, and helps us forgive each person who has abused us by touching each of our wounds with forgiveness and healing.

The uniqueness of the Easter message is that it invariably changes the lives of those who find themselves touched by it. The believer who affirms that the Lord is risen, therefore, should consider next what it is that the Lord has sent him or her to do. Easter is all about transformation through repentance, forgiveness and healing

Micky dealt with her sexual with faith, confronting her abuser with love and expressing her anger and hurt in a positive way, as Jesus advises us to do in Mt 18:15 (“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him how you feel.”). She ended her letter with the invitation for him to consider healing, getting help, to change. She was moving towards Easter faith and hope. Her resolve is to become an educator in area of abuse, to help bring about change. Resurrection is all about transformation

through forgiveness and healing

The Eucharist that we celebrate today is our turning to the Lord for the power of his Spirit to transform us into the Body of Christ. It is also a commitment to serving one another, to being involved with one another. The presence of the Risen Lord in our midst requires a commitment to the earthly lives of people. It cannot be reduced to an uninvolved and purely spiritual reality.

So, experience Easter in your life, and make heaven happen in the here and now. Believe in Jesus; receive his forgiveness; let his powerful love heal, transform and change you, so that you will be an agent of forgiveness, peace and joy.