

## **Wednesday of the Second Week of Easter**

### **Homily of Bishop John Barres**

#### **St. Agnes Cathedral**

**April 14, 2021**

**In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis states: “Christ’s resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated the world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force...Each day in our world beauty is born anew, it rises transformed through the storms of history...Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power.” (276)**

**Think for a moment of every Gospel Empty Tomb experience and Resurrection appearance that we pray and celebrate this Easter season. They rekindle our hope in a world that seems at time very dark. They rekindle our fire to be missionary disciples of mercy to the world.**

**Think of Luke 24 and the two men in dazzling garments saying to the women before the empty tomb: “Why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised.”**

**Think of John 20 and Mary Magdala discovering the empty tomb in the dark – her running to tell Simon Peter and John and in turn John and Peter running to the tomb in hope and expectation.**

**Think of Jesus addressing Thomas in John 20: “Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe.” And then Thomas’ emotional profession of faith that rings and echoes through the centuries: “My Lord and my God!”**

**Think of the Resurrected Christ in John 21 appearing to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias after a frustrating night of fishless fishing. The Risen Lord says**

very simply: “Cast the net over the right side of the boat and you will find something.”

That “something” was a miraculous catch of fish, followed by a breakfast of bread and fish cooked on a charcoal fire. This passage concludes with him asking Simon Peter three times: “Simon, Son of John, do you love me?” – an experience of mercy and forgiveness for Peter as it echoed and paralleled his three fold denial of the Lord.

Think of the two disciples in Luke 24 who meet Jesus on the Road to Emmaus and whose hearts burn with the Risen Lord’s explanation of the fulfillment of the Scriptures and who recognize him at the breaking of the bread.

Think of the description of St. Paul’s encounter with the Risen Lord in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles and the words of Jesus to him: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me...I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.” It is the Risen Lord who transforms Saul the Christian persecutor into Paul the unstoppable, intrepid missionary.

Every one of these descriptions of the Empty Tomb experiences of the disciples or the Resurrection appearances of Jesus is an expression of the Mercy of the Risen Christ.

Fear and locked doors surrender to love and bold witness to the Risen Christ. Christ’s merciful grace streams cosmically from inside each one of his Glorified Wounds out to the World and mysteriously to each and every one of us in both a personal and communal way.

Every Resurrection Appearance expresses the beauty of the third chapter of the Gospel of John that we heard this morning: “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life.” (John 3:16)