April 15, 2018

Third Sunday of Easter
Ps 4:2,4,7-8,9
1 John 2:1-5a
Luke 24:35—48

By John Bostwick, O. Praem.

CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST

**Preliminary note: Psalm 4**
Ps. 4 is a core psalm of Compline; it is prayed nightly in monastic usage, weekly in the Roman usage. It is a cry of the heart for justice and inner peace but expresses confidence that the prayer will be heard and answered – and ends on a confident note of peace and rest.

As I read the assigned texts for today, two themes emerge: First, the insistence of Christ’s real, bodily presence in the resurrection appearances and, secondly, the necessity of suffering as integral to the path to life.

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The disciples find themselves huddled together in the Upper Room. In John’s version they are afraid. The two disciples who encountered the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus and made manifest in the breaking of bread return to share this news with those “in hiding” when Jesus himself appears among them. His behavior makes it clear that this is no mirage or ghost, but the living, resurrected Christ. He who was dead is alive. This makes all the difference in the world.

So those who had been hiding out of fear are found in the account from Acts proclaiming boldly the good news of Jesus’ Paschal Mystery: his suffering, death and resurrection. The absolute confidence that Christ who faced suffering and death is truly alive and abides among them.

It is the awareness of and experience of the living Christ among them that changes the disciples, calls them out to be strong courageous advocates and preachers of that core Christian faith, strong and fearless.

The question this raises for me is: how would we be different if we truly and unashamedly believed that Jesus Christ is alive and present among us? How would that conviction affect how we live together in our homes? How would our experience of Church be transformed? How would Congress be different if its members were consciously aware of Christ’s living presence among them? How might the White House be different?
The fear is that we give lip service to the reality of the living Christ in our midst and thus deprive ourselves of its power to change and motivate us to truly live Gospel lives. But we can – and must – embrace the full reality of our faith.

Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

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