

# SCRIPTURAL EXEGESIS

*by John Linge, Director of RCIA*

## Third Sunday of Easter

*Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; Psalms 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9; 1 John 2:1-5a, Luke 24:35-48*

In the first reading, we continue hearing Luke's account of the early days of the Church. After receiving the Holy Spirit, the newly-inspired Peter courageously began preaching to the very crowds that had been complicit in executing Jesus. He invited them to repent of their sins and be converted. Let us hear Peter's words addressed to us, so that we may put aside our selfish ways and follow the Way of Jesus.

In our response to this reading, we express our confidence that the Lord hears our prayer, puts gladness in our hearts and gives us great peace.

In the second reading, John exhorts us to avoid sin by keeping the commandments of God. Jesus told us that the commandments to love God and to love your neighbor contain all the other commandments. The love Jesus calls us to is like His, an unselfish love, willing the good for our neighbor whether or not he or she deserves it. We can only have this kind of love through the self-sacrifice of Jesus, who is now our advocate before the Father. It is through His sacrifice that our sins are forgiven and we are brought to new life. Even when we do fail and lapse into sinful behavior, Jesus remains faithful, ready to receive us back to relationship with Him when we repent of our sin.

In the Gospel, Luke tells us the aftermath of the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, when they met Jesus but did not recognize Him until He broke bread. When they realized that they had been dining with the risen Lord, they returned to Jerusalem to tell the Apostles about what had happened. While they were speaking, Jesus appeared in their midst. They were terrified, thinking he was a ghost. Perhaps they feared that he would punish them for abandoning Him and denying Him. He greeted them with a word of peace and proved to them that He was not a ghost, but a resurrected human being by showing them His wounds and by eating some food. Once they were convinced it was, indeed, the Lord, He proceeded to teach them about how the Scriptures foretold the events of His life, thus laying the foundation for the Peter's preaching in the first reading. The resurrection of Jesus into new life and a glorified body gives us hope that one day we, too, will rise to new life in our own glorified body, and that the death we will inevitably experience is not the end, but the beginning of a new life.

