

Homily for 3rd Sunday of Easter, Year B – April 18, 2021

A few years ago, a priest named Monsignor Charles Pope pondered the question of why Jesus did not stay with the disciples continuously during the whole forty days up to the Ascension. Why, instead, did Our Lord make various appearances to different groups?

Without trying to read our Lord's Mind, he presented three reasons – three things Our Lord was teaching them, by these occasional appearances. I share them with you now.

Two reasons are from Saint Thomas Aquinas.

The first reason Jesus appeared was so that they would be convinced of the Resurrection – that He really rose from death. And so He appeared to them, ate with them, spoke with them, enough times for them to know, and have no doubt, that He really had risen.

The second reason was to manifest – to make clear – that He is glorified. He is The Lord. They were being given glimpses that He is more than they thought. Their relationship with Him was not going to be the same kind of daily walking with Him with normal limitations of time and space.

The third reason offered for Jesus appearing occasionally to the disciples was to teach them that Jesus was going to be with them in a new way. By his appearances He would get them ready for the time after the Ascension – when they would not see Him again in the earthly sense they had up until then. They would no longer see Him with their physical eyes. They would now experience His abiding presence with them in ways like the Breaking of the Bread – The Eucharist.

These are still the ways Jesus makes Himself known to us. These are still the ways the Church brings people to see and know Christ; through us His Church as His Body, in Her teachings, in our scriptures, in our lives, in our prayers...and particularly we remember today - in the Sacraments.

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A few special words for all the First Communicants