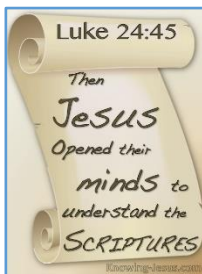


After Jesus rose from the dead, he appeared to his Apostles and stood in their midst. As you could understand, “they were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost (Lk 24:37).” The Scriptures say, after calming his disciples down and convincing them he was not a ghost, he said to them,



*“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and in the prophets and psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, “Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name*

*to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold I am sending the promise of my Father upon you; but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.” (Lk 24:44–49)*



My question is, does God still do this? Does Jesus still open minds to understand how the entire Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled in him? The simple answer is, “Yes!” But, as always, God’s gifts are not forced upon anyone; they are reserved for those who freely choose good over evil, love over selfish desires, truth over lies, God’s will over their own will. Two examples of this are found in today’s Readings.

The Second Reading in today’s Mass speaks for itself – to truly know God, to have our minds opened by him and to be perfected in his love, requires humble submission to His will:

*“My children, I am writing this to you so that you may not commit sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. He is expiation for our sins, and not for our sins only but for those of the whole world. The way we may be sure that we know him is to keep his commandments. Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps his word, the love of God is truly perfected in him. This is the way we may know that we are in union with him:” (1 Jn 2:1–5)*

In the First Reading, St. Peter passionately exhorts to repentance those who out of ignorance have “denied the Holy and Righteous One” and put to death the author of life (Acts 3:13-19). Unfortunately, the dilemma faced by St. Peter is in full force today. Many today are ignorant of the truth revealed by Jesus – the Holy and Righteous One – and are seeking in their own way to put to death the author of life. How will their minds be opened?

Now, perhaps more than ever, people are closing their minds to the author of life who reveals to us the Truth and the Way to love and eternal fulfillment. Oh, how we need Catholic Christians who, like St. Peter, have humbly stood in the presence of the risen Lord and have had their minds opened to understand the true faith, so that, with all the passion of a totally convinced man possessed by the Spirit of the living God, they may speak the truth in love. How else will God open closed minds today?

Happy Easter!! -- Fr. Terry Sta