

Homily for 3rd Sunday of Easter

There is a story told of a self-righteous young man who set off through the forest on a long journey. After a day's travel, he came upon an old man who had lived in the forest his whole life. The young man decided to spend a few days with the old man. In the course of his visit, the old man told the young man that he prayed to God every night by placing a plate of food in the forest. The old man knew that God heard his prayers because each morning the plate of food was empty. The young man assured the old man that he was wrong. It was not God who ate the food, but the fox.

Perplexed, the old man decided to discover the truth for himself. That night he set out his plate of food as was his custom and then hid in the bushes to watch what would happen. Sure enough, the fox came along and ate the food. Dejectedly, the old man returned to his home and confessed to the young man that, indeed, he had been foolish. He assured the young man that he would never again set out the plate of food in the forest.

Convinced that he had done some good, the young man continued on his journey. That night he bedded down in the forest to sleep. In the middle of the night God cried out to the young man: "What

have you done to my friend, the old man in the forest?” “Done? I have done nothing,” exclaimed the young man, “except to share the truth with the old man.” “Truth!” God cried out. “What is this truth of yours? Because of this truth, I now have an old man who does not know how to pray to me and a fox who starves.”

The young man lived with the delusion that he knew the truth. It is this misunderstanding of truth that is at the heart of today’s Gospel.

Consider the Gospel very carefully. The disciples are frightened. Perhaps the people who killed Jesus would now go after them. So they cower and hide in the upper room. Doors are locked, lights kept low, words are spoken in hushed tones so that no one will find them in their hiding place. And yet despite their efforts and the obstacles that they create Christ stands in their midst.

This is where we find the truth of the Gospel. The disciples are not looking for Christ. As far as they are concerned He is dead and buried. It is Christ who is looking for them. It is Christ who comes into their midst. It is Christ who decides the time to reveal Himself to them.

Here is the great mystery of faith. In every moment of our lives, in the brightest and in the darkest of times, it is God who reveals Himself in new and unexpected ways. And God reveals Himself to us not when we seek, demand or ask for it...God reveals Himself in His own

time....even in moments when we do not search for Him or even try to hide from His presence. The great truth of this Gospel is that we are not in control....God is. And no matter when God reveals himself to us His message is always the same: “Be at peace...for I am here to save you.”