

On the Sunday Gospel (Lk 24,35-48)
3rd Sunday of Easter. 18 April 2021



“Look at my hands and my feet.”

What should I do, and how should I pray, when I or my loved one is in a difficult condition?

In my reflection today, let me share about my struggle to read today’s gospel and how I deal with the critical condition of my mother. She was rushed to the hospital in the Philippines yesterday because she was unconscious at 3 o’clock in the morning.

How would I read the gospel when Jesus says, **“Have you anything here to eat?”** when my mother at home could not eat in the past few days. She would refuse to drink even a little milk and water. How would I respond to Jesus’ words to his disciples, **“You are witnesses of these things”** – the things about Jesus’ life, suffering, death, and resurrection – when my mother has been suffering from her illness for a month now?

The answer might be obvious. The gospel today is filled with light, meaning, and inspiration. But how could one whose mind and heart are covered with worry and sadness about his mother’s condition understand, especially when he is on the other side of the world? And not just me. There are a million others in the same situation, even worse than mine. Now, many must even be struggling for their own life or that of their loved ones.

His Eminence, Luis Cardinal Tagle, in his homily in our community Sunday Mass today in our Filipino College today, provides the answer, “Look at Jesus.” He talks about **the risen Lord opening the Scriptures to his disciples** and explaining the meaning of the events, even the sad events in life. The Cardinal said, “For those of us experiencing difficult moments in life: maybe when you enter those moments, see how Jesus experienced that too. Look at the gospel, how Jesus experienced betrayal, physical pain, how Jesus dealt with the sick. And as we go through that experience, maybe, what the word of God says and what Jesus experienced could help us understand the action of God. And may it help us also understand the Gospel and the Scriptures.” The word of God and our experience of the risen Jesus could help us deal with whatever situation in life we are in.

In the gospel today, Jesus, after showing His wounds in His hands and feet and after letting His disciples touch him, asked for food, **“Have you anything here to eat?”** The Cardinal said of this, “The risen Lord did not remove the wounds, the marks of His suffering. In fact, the risen Lord took the wounds of the world into the risen state and gave them a new meaning. Today, it is not just a wound, but the basic need, ‘Do you have anything to eat?’ The risen Lord does not distance Himself from the basic need, the need for food.”

On this, the Cardinal urges, “This is an invitation for us to care for one another, to break bread, to hear the body of Christ, the community, asking, ‘Do you have water for me to drink? Do you have anything there that I can eat? Do you have anything there that I can wear? Do you have some shelter where I can spend the night?’ The risen Lord brings the needs of the world into his blessed state and makes his body, the Church, a witness to the world on how God cares.”

What then should I do when I or my loved is in a difficult condition? How then should I pray? I look at the hands and feet of Jesus. I read and listen to what God says and I prepare for what I can do to help.

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