

Well, we know everything that God has done for us. In today's readings we heard the reaction of the disciples after they encounter the risen Lord. We see the disciples with many emotions: fear, joy, terror and so on. We need to master our feelings, especially if they are overwhelming, if those feelings prevent us from living in peace, love, harmony, communion and respect.

Peter was brave enough to tell the Israelites what they had done to Jesus. He did not care to be ignored. He overcame his fears, but before he spoke up, he healed a paralytic man who used to beg every day in the Temple gate called "Beautiful" (Acts 3:1-15). Indeed, the human race is the most beautiful of all living things; we are the image of God.

But sin destroys this image; sin leads us into ignorance, into arrogance and pride. This is what Peter tells the Israelites, that they killed the author of life because of ignorance. Then, why do we sin? St. Thomas Aquinas agreed with Peter and said that we sin because of ignorance because we do not understand that we chose death over life. St. Augustine put it in more simple words; we sin because we like it, as simple as that. In the second reading Saint Paul tells us that if we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father. An advocate that defends all those who need his Mercy, his compassion, and his love. Therefore if we sin, we have the means to overcome that sin: sacraments and grace.

If you noticed in the readings, however, there is something more important that we need to do: overcome our feelings, fears and sin. It appears two times during the readings. The first time Peter said, "We are his witnesses." That is precisely what we all have to do; to witness in the world the love, compassion, joy, sense of humor and the Mercy of God. This however implies some suffering, but it is a suffering that will be rewarded in eternal life. The second time that witness appears is on the lips of the risen Jesus: On Easter evening,

he opens the disciples' minds to the mystery of his death and resurrection and tells them: "You are witnesses of this" (Lk. 24, 48).

God has done many things for us, every day is a blessing and yet all he wants from us are the very same words he spoke to his disciples, "You are witnesses of this." Once we have encountered the risen Lord, things cannot be the same, and they should not be the same. In the midst of suffering, we have the shield of faith, we have the sword of the Word of God, we are sons and daughters of God, and we have the sacraments to restore our humanity to that full image of God in us.

Pope Benedict asked a question in one of his homilies, "Who is a witness? A witness is one who has seen, has seen and been left involved by the event. The witness is one who has changed his life in Christ. Just like Peter, who talked about Jesus in word and deed. We are called to do the same because we may be agents of salvation for others.