

*Readings*

Acts 3:13-15, 17-19

Ps 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9

1 Jn 2:1-5a

Lk 24:35-48

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***You are witnesses of these things.***

Jesus, ever the teacher, follows a pattern of behavior following his resurrection that is instructive. It both enlightens his disciples as to what has transpired and positions them to be commissioned as witnesses of those events.

The pattern is this: appearances, failure to recognize him, reprimand of doubting, sharing of food, teaching the meaning of the Scriptures, and the subsequent experience of wonder and joy.

This pattern has one goal: Resurrection followed death. Jesus' insistence on this fact is pronounced: "*Touch me and see, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*"

The commissioning, the sending forth is clear: *You are witnesses of these things*. In other words – the mission begins.

To witness means that one sees, hears, or knows by personal presence and perception. It is the ability to testify to; to give or afford evidence of.

Three unlikely and ostensibly unqualified personalities accept the mantle of witness, defying what logic and past performance would recommend: Peter, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas.

Peter and Jesus: *“Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times,”* and *“You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church.”*

Mary Magdala and Jesus: *“Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven demons were expelled, found the tomb empty.”* (Mary was the first one to see and announce the Risen Lord). And *“Mary! Do not touch me for I have not ascended to my Father.”*

Thomas and Jesus: *“Unless I put my hand in his side...I will not believe,”* and *“My Lord and my God.”*

Did Peter, Mary, and Thomas meet the criteria for bona fide witnesses? Emphatically, yes! God chooses the weak and makes them strong. Each of them had transformational, first-hand experiences of the Risen Christ which radically changed their lives.

Recall that

- Peter **denied** Christ.
- Mary Magdalene lived with **demons**.
- Thomas **doubted**.

Yet, their testimony is integral to the foundation of our Church. Whatever demons, doubts, or denials roam the confines of our lives, we, too, are commissioned, sent to announce to the world, He is Risen! *“We are witnesses of these things.”*