

Third Sunday of Easter, Epistle, Year A

THE SPACE BETWEEN

1 Peter 1:17-23

Third Sunday of Easter

Analysis by Mark Marius

17If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. 18You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, 19but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. 20Christ was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. 21Through Christ you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

22Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. 23You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

DIAGNOSIS: Old Ways

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): We Are Still Here
The futile ways we have inherited still persist. Even after the resurrection it would seem that we are not free from sin.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): We Are Still Human

Our appetite for the world remains. We continue to consume perishable things—and, worse, we trust them.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): We Are Still Judged
Even in the light of truth we struggle; we deny that we put ultimate trust in anything other than God. But our sinful deeds invoke our death.

PROGNOSIS: New Ways

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): We Are Still Free
The ransom Christ paid for us is eternal. The precious blood of Christ is imperishable. Christ's death and resurrection have rendered our sin and fear powerless.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): We Are Still God's

Because of Christ we can trust in God. Our hope has found a home in the imperishable seed, planted within us at our baptism. And our faith and hope are strengthened each time we partake of the yield of the Seed (Christ, v. 23).

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): We Still Endure
This is the heart of this passage. We live the resurrection with genuine mutual love for one another. God's enduring (resurrected) Word is our seed and source. It burns so hot within us that we are compelled to share that love (a verb) with others.