

**3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A, 23rd April 2023, St. Mulumba's Parish, Igu.
Homily by Archbishop I. A. Kaigama.**

Readings: Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

Stay with us Lord on our Journey

My dear parishioners of St. Mulumba's Parish, Igu, I bring warm Easter greetings to you and to your Parish priest, Rev Fr. John Jimoh. Today I come among you not to administer the sacrament of confirmation, but to pray with you, to encourage you and to express my pastoral solidarity with you on account of the security challenges that you encounter now and again, due to attacks on your community by "unknown gunmen." During the last attack, some of your members and those of the community were kidnapped and a violent attempt was also made on the priest in the parish house.

It is sad that despite the promises of the government to ensure the safety of her citizens, these heinous acts of criminality continue to fester in different communities across the nation. Proactive measures must be taken once and for all to bring such ugly situations under control. We pray for the conversion of those involved in perpetuating such dastardly acts, just as we also pray for the safety and quick release of all who are held in captivity by the criminal elements.

Providentially, today too is the 28th anniversary of my episcopal ordination, since I was entrusted with the task of leading the flock under my care, both strong and weak, healthy, and sick, rich and poor, suffering and needy and trying my best to be "all things to all men" as St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 9:22.

Still in the joyful mood of Easter, let our minds remain focused on the risen Lord and Saviour, who has won for us such a great victory through His passion, death and His glorious resurrection, opening for us the pathway to eternal life.

Our first reading today narrates the testimony of faith by St. Peter who proclaimed the truth concerning the crucified Lord and assured believers of the power of the

resurrection of Christ and taught that it is by this same power of the resurrection that Christians have been transformed from the kingdom of death to the kingdom of life, and so, cannot remain captives to the powers of evil.

If the resurrection did not take place, the death of the Lord Jesus would just have been construed to be a sad and tragic death of an ordinary man condemned to death because of the jealousy and political intrigues of the people of his time.

Saved by Christ's precious blood, St. Peter therefore calls us to live impeccable lives of holiness, witnessing to the risen Lord, and to be truly alive in, and with Christ.

When in today's gospel the Lord appeared to two of His demoralized and disillusioned disciples who were travelling on their way to Emmaus, the Lord discussed the passages of the Scriptures about the suffering and the hardships that the Messiah had to suffer. The risen Lord encouraged and strengthened the spirit and the faith of the two disciples. At the breaking of bread, their eyes opened, and they recognized Jesus just before He vanished from their presence (cf. Lk. 24:31), and these disciples hurriedly returned to Jerusalem, to tell the other disciples of how they had seen the risen Lord.

The cloud of despair hovers over us with the ugly incidences of kidnapping, violence, and unprovoked attacks such as the cases in Nasarawa, Benue, Southern Kaduna, Southern Taraba, and in different parts of the country. Our assurance as Christians is that as with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, Jesus Christ is deeply concerned about us; He never allows us to suffer alone.

St. Paul gives us an assurance in Romans 5:3-5: "...We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Jesus reminds us that in the words of the scripture and through the breaking of bread in memory of Him, He nourishes our life and renews us daily. As we attend Mass, we

recognize Christ anew. As a people of faith, we must not be blinded by our sufferings or be buried in them; we must look towards the resurrection and hold on firmly to the promises of God. As Christ rose from the grave, we believe that all will be well again. Our lands and communities will by the grace of God, be renewed to become more safe, more peaceful, and more prosperous.

The joy of Easter and the celebration of Sallah by our Muslim brothers and sisters should inspire us to look inwards towards renewal and newness to genuinely work towards peaceful coexistence and harmony.

May the risen Lord, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, continue to guide us and give us the strength and courage to proclaim His truth and resurrection to the world. As Jesus walked with the sad, dejected, worried disciples, may we experience His consolation in our dark moments, and as we receive Him in the Holy Communion, let Him strengthen us and especially your parish priest, Rev Fr. John Jimoh, all the members of St. Mulumba's Parish, Igu, and indeed the entire Igu community and may He continue to preserve you in His love and peace. Amen.