May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Amen.

It’s not enough that tomb is empty. It’s not enough to proclaim, “Christ is risen!” It’s not enough to believe in the resurrection. At some point we have to move from the event of the resurrection to experiencing the resurrection. Experiencing resurrected life begins with recognizing the risen Christ among us. That is the gift of Easter and it is also the difficulty and challenge described in today’s gospel.

Cleopas and his companion are telling the other disciples how Jesus appeared to them on the road to Emmaus when Jesus, again, shows up out of nowhere, interrupting their conversation. “*Peace be with you*,” he says. They see him, they hear his voice, but they don’t recognize him. They “*thought that they were seeing a ghost*.” They know Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried. They know dead men don’t come back to life. This can only be a ghost, a spirit without a body.

Resurrected life can never be comprehended, contained, or controlled by human thought or understanding. Jesus’ resurrection compels us to step outside our usual human understandings of reality and enter into the divine reality.

That new reality begins with touching and seeing, flesh and bones, hands and feet, and broiled fish. Jesus said to his disciples, “*Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have*.” Then “*he showed them his hands and his feet*.” After this he ate a piece of broiled fish in their presence.

Flesh and bones, hands and feet, and broiled fish are the things of creation, the natural order. Mary, a woman created by God, gave Jesus his flesh and bones and his hands and feet. She also gave him the stomach that would eat the fish God created. The very same flesh and bones, the very same hands and feet, appeared to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus and then “*vanished from their sight*” (Luke 24:31), and now show up unannounced and unexpected in the midst of their conversation with others. In last week’s gospel Jesus’ hands and feet, his flesh and bones, passed through walls and locked doors.

The resurrected life of Christ reveals that all creation and every one of us are filled with God, holiness, divinity. Nothing can bind or supersede the grace that is given us through resurrection: unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness, unconditional life. That is, I think, one of the most difficult things for us to see, believe, and live into. It is, however, the divine reality into which we are invited, not at some future time and place but here and now.

Christ our God longs and desires to open our minds to understand the scriptures, to understand all that has been written, spoken, and revealed about him in whatever form that happens and has happened. That’s what Jesus did for the disciples and it’s what he does for us. This is not an academic or intellectual understanding. That the disciples are witnesses does not mean they now have all the answers. It means they now have the life Jesus wants to give them. They are witnesses based not on what they know, but on who they are, how they live, and their relationship with the risen Christ.

Think about a time in your life when you lost track of time, when you were so awake, so present, that you entered a new world. Think about a time when life seemed more real than it ever had and you touched or tasted life in a way never before. Recall a moment when your heart opened, softened, and you knew you were somehow different. Remember that day when you sensed something new was being offered you; possibilities that you did not create for yourself. Those are the moments when Christ opens our minds to understand. They are moments of awe and wonder that leave us in sacred silence. They fill our eyes with tears. We weep, not from sorrow or pain, but the water of new life. They are the moments in which we say, “I never want this to end. I don’t want to leave this place.”

In each of those moments the one who is fully alive and risen, the Christ, is calling us to see and recognize him, to join him, and to discover our new life. This is the authentic self we long to become, the self that we already are, and the self we are becoming. This is resurrected life.

“*You are witnesses of these things*,” he says to us. Tell it. Live it. Become it. The resurrected life is yours. You are witnesses. You are witnesses. Amen.