



**Meditation for the Third Sunday of Easter**  
**April 18, 2021**

[Jesus said] *“Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 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.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.*

[Luke 24: 38-40]

The Gospel of Luke describes several meetings between Jesus and his disciples after the resurrection. These are tales of confusion and wonder as Jesus’ followers slowly and awkwardly recognize that God has indeed raised their beloved teacher from the dead. These fifty days of Eastertide assure and challenge each of us to embrace this truth. I often return to this poem by John Updike as a guide to being a witness to this mystery:

Make no mistake: if He rose at all  
it was as His body;  
if the cells' dissolution did not reverse, the  
molecules  
reknit, the amino acids rekindle,  
the Church will fall.

It was not as the flowers,  
each soft Spring recurrent;  
it was not as His Spirit in the mouths and  
fuddled  
eyes of the eleven apostles;  
it was as His flesh: ours.

The same hinged thumbs and toes,  
the same valved heart  
that-pierced-died, withered, paused, and then  
regathered out of enduring Might  
new strength to enclose.

Let us not mock God with metaphor,  
analogy, sidestepping, transcendence;  
making of the event a parable, a sign painted in  
the faded credulity of earlier ages:  
let us walk through the door.

The stone is rolled back, not papier-mâché,  
not a stone in a story,  
but the vast rock of materiality that in the slow  
grinding of time will eclipse for each of us  
the wide light of day.

And if we will have an angel at the tomb,  
make it a real angel,  
weighty with Max Planck's quanta, vivid with  
hair,  
opaque in the dawn light, robed in real linen  
spun on a definite loom.

Let us not seek to make it less monstrous,  
for our own convenience, our own sense of  
beauty,  
lest, awakened in one unthinkable hour, we are  
embarrassed by the miracle,  
and crushed by remonstrance.

John Updike, “Seven Stanzas at Easter”