

**Third Sunday of Easter**  
**Year A, 2026**

Acts 2:14, 22-33

1 Pt 1:17-21

Ps 16

Lk 24:13-35

*Conduct yourselves with reverence*

*“Conduct yourselves with reverence,”* we read in our second reading, from the first letter of St Peter. *“Conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning.”* To sojourn means to stay temporarily, to dwell for a time, to visit as a temporary resident, as one passing through. Where we sojourn is not our final destination. And this life, all of it, however long it may seem or however short it is, is a sojourning. Our life is temporary, and we are merely passing through. Psalm 90:10 attests to this: *“Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are strong; Most of them are toil and sorrow; they pass quickly, and we are gone.”* We are temporary residents here on earth, passers-through, sojourners. Sojourning is about *time*, and the time is brief.

Sojourning is also about *place*, the “here” of our temporary residence. Time and place. The here and now. This is what we have as sojourners. But as sojourners who call upon God as our Father, *“who invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one’s works,”* our sojourning must take on a certain quality, that of reverence. We are, after all, children of the Most High God, called to live in reverence, not as renegades or rioters or rebels.

And so, in the here and now, temporary as both are, the Scriptures command that we Christian sojourners conduct ourselves with

reverence (cf Rom 13:13). In other words, that we behave respectably. In deeper terms, that we be in awe and act accordingly, for the same God whom we call our Father will also judge us impartially according to our works.

So here, for your consideration, I present five ways in which we can (and must) conduct ourselves with reverence. By our reverent conduct we can maintain the experience of the fire that burns within our hearts and find a connection with the God who inspires the fire within.

The first way to conduct ourselves with reverence is in, with, and through *nature*. The earth is our temporary abode, which we *share* with all other living things, and as sojourners we experience it only for a brief time and in relatively few places. To revere nature is to appreciate it in its beauty and power and goodness. We revere nature by traveling to places of natural beauty, not as consumers, but as contemplatives. We revere nature by feeling the sacredness of each place, that it is good to be here, to see and hear and feel and smell and taste a place of natural beauty. But to revere nature is also to discover the wonder and beauty that can be found in every place, even those most familiar to us, even those whose beauty is not apparent, even in our own backyards.

The hunter reverences nature when he draws back his arrow and his heart pounds as he takes aim. The hiker reverences nature when she explore a less-traveled trail and comes upon an

unspoiled scene. The horticulturalist reverences nature when preparing the soil and planting seeds and pruning trees and picking flowers and enjoying and sharing the harvest of their gardens. In our relationship with the earth, its peoples, animals, plants, and resources, we must conduct ourselves reverently, properly, fittingly, allowing nature to inspire us and then behaving in accordance with the goodness, wonder, and awe of creation.

The second way to conduct ourselves with reverence is how we think and act toward *others*. Others, by definition, are other. They think, feel, perceive, and act sometimes in a manner wholly unlike me. And if I approach them with respect, which is a type of reverence, others can surprise and delight. What underlies all reverence and respect is an attitude of *non-ownership*. I do not own nature. It is not mine to do with as I please. I do not own others. They are not there to conform to my wishes.

And so to reverence others, I must allow them to be other, to be themselves, to be not me. This is especially hard with those we love, because we have expectations of them. Sometimes our closeness and intimacy with our loved ones can stifle the sense of wonder at how unlike us they are, at how they are their own unique person. I have to move from wanting them to be the way I want them to be to seeing and experiencing them as they are ... for better or for worse. And very often, there's a lot more better than worse, once I clear out the cobwebs of my own expectations for

them. In this time of our sojourning, we must conduct ourselves with reverence for others, who are other than us.

The third way to conduct ourselves with reverence is through service. Part of sojourning with reverence is acting for the good of the place of our temporary stay. We honor the accommodations we receive, that is, creation. We respect those who are near us, our neighbors. We seek to improve the culture and institutions of the place of our sojourn. We are here only a short time, as sojourners. And as Christians, as children of God Most High, we must conduct ourselves as noble guests, not as demanding customers, not as difficult clients, not as undiscerning consumers.

Service to nature ... don't pollute, don't litter, don't despoil, don't exploit. But also do preserve, do conserve, do clean up and improve. I know it's not your litter, but the simple act of picking up litter is a type of reverence. The sojourner is a noble guest, one who, though passing through, is not beneath serving and is certainly above the entitlement of being served. The reverent sojourner imitates the Lord Jesus, who came not to be served, but to serve.

Service to others ... don't control, don't ridicule, don't hate, don't exploit. But also do protect, do help, do be kind and compassionate. The reverent sojourner sees the needs of others and does not ignore them. The reverent sojourner is the embodiment of the good Samaritan, who came to the aid of a man in need, unlike

the priest and the Levite, who passed by him without so much as offering him a smile or a kind word. In a word, service is a type of reverence.

The fourth way to conduct ourselves with reverence is by treating ourselves with respect and reverence. This is not an invitation to selfishness, egocentrism, or grandiosity, but an acknowledgement that I am created in God's image and likeness and meant to be like God, holy. The words of Psalm 139 echo forth: *"I praise you, Lord, because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."* God's works are wonderful, and I am one of his works. It is a sign of humility, of humble acceptance of God's gift, that I can acknowledge that my very self is something sacred, and therefore something to be treated with reverence. So be reverent toward your body. Care for it, nurture it. Be reverent toward your mind. Seek truth, be curious, look for light. Be reverent toward your heart and spirit. Desire peace, want goodness, live in holiness.

The fifth way to conduct ourselves with reverence is through gratitude. Reverence, I said a little earlier, begins with an attitude of non-ownership. And the wisdom of the Scriptures reminds us time and again that *"we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it"* (1 Tim 6:7). Our "ownership" is ephemeral, momentary. When we die, all that we "own," all that we consider "ours," is no longer in our possession. Death is the ultimate confirmation of our status as sojourners, temporary

residents, who are given a brief time to experience place and people and self and to be of service.

But death is not the end. It is the beginning of a new and eternal life, one that is conditioned on how we conduct ourselves in this life. And undergirding all our sojourn in this life must be gratitude. If reverence begins with an attitude of non-ownership, it is brought to completion by gratitude. We are given ... *as a gift* ... this time to experience nature, and others, and self, and to be of service. For all that I am given, freely, without any effort on my part, beyond anything of what I deserve, I must be thankful, grateful. This is an essential part of reverence. I am grateful for the things I have, for the things I enjoy: like the taste of my mouthwash, like the smell of brownies in the oven, like the ability to walk. I am grateful for the good things that are: like a fine spring day, like fresh air, and the green of the grass. I am grateful for the bad things that are not: like not living in a warzone, like not suffering physically, at least in some part of my body, if only in my little finger.

So these are five ways in which we can conduct ourselves with reverence during this time of our sojourn. Reverence in, with, and through nature. Reverence, that is respect, toward others. Reverence through acts of service toward our natural and cultural surroundings. Reverence toward ourselves, in our bodies, minds, and souls. And gratitude, which completes and ensures reverence.

Now, perhaps a few of you are saying to yourselves, “Fine enough. But what do this have to do with God, with our being in awe of him, with behaving with reverence toward him?” Well, here’s the problem. The difficulty that many of us have is connecting to God directly. We often find it hard or even impossible to experience God, and we really want to. And so each way of conducting ourselves in reverence is a way of reaching out toward God. What I am telling you is that if we cultivate reverential awe and wonder in each of these ways, then we will, step by step, open our hearts and our minds to encounter God in his goodness and lovingkindness. Our hearts, like those of the disciples who walked with Christ and heard him speak of the Scriptures, will then begin to burn within us, and we will know and recognize God in all things.

With all this in mind, and, please God, with our hearts burning within us, we now turn *with reverence*, with awe and wonder, toward the great prayer of thanksgiving, the holy Eucharist, where Christ himself is made known to us in the breaking of the bread.