

Reverend Eric R. Fasano, Vicar General  
Homily – 3rd Sunday of Easter – A – 4/26/2020  
Rdgs. Acts 2:14, 22–28; 1 Peter 1:17–21; Luke 24:13–35.

On a road we didn't plan to travel, making a journey we didn't want to make; a journey that seems overshadowed by confusion, fear, sorrow, suffering and even death... If that accurately captures where we find ourselves on this third Sunday of Easter 2020, then **perhaps** we are in a better position than ever before to understand where the disciples found themselves as they walked the road to Emmaus nearly 2000 years ago.

The disciples knew what they witnessed in Jesus: the miracles, preaching the likes of which they had never heard before, and the promise of a new and everlasting Kingdom of peace. They knew what they were expecting from Jesus: a king, perhaps a conqueror, someone who would restore the former glory of the Kingdom of Israel. But now they must grapple with his suffering and death. They were so heartbroken and distressed, that they did not even recognize Jesus walking with them. How true that is in every age. When we are sad, confused and frightened, do we often fail to recognize the Lord walking with us?

If Jesus had not revealed himself to his disciples after his resurrection, then all they would have been left with was suffering and death, in other words, meaninglessness. But our Lord **does** reveal himself, and that changes everything. It changed everything for the disciples, and it **should** change everything for us.

Do we see Christ through our sorrow, our confusion and fear? Whether we are doctors, nurses, police, fire or rescue personnel, do we see the face of Christ in the people we are treating and assisting? Can they recognize Christ in us? If we are grocery store workers, teachers, or clergy, sanitation or utility workers, or any of the countless other providers of services we often take for granted, do we recognize the face of Jesus in the face of every person we serve? If we are a Moms or Dads, just trying to keep it together while the kids watch the movie "Frozen" for the twelfth time (or, if you are from a different generation, maybe "The Sound of Music"), do we see Christ in the midst of all of this? If we have lost our job, if our business is in jeopardy, can we recognize that our Lord is walking with us? Can we perceive his presence in the love and generosity of the people around us?

Along the journey to Emmaus, Jesus interpreted the Scriptures, opening them up for his disciples. The result, we are told, was that their hearts burned within them. They burned with a longing for comfort in the midst of their sorrows. They burned with a need for courage in the midst of their fears. They burned with a hunger for meaning in the midst of suffering and death.

Peter, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, was confused, fearful and sorrowful **before** he encountered the risen Christ. Once our Lord revealed himself to Peter **after** the resurrection, everything changed. Peter's heart then burned with a desire to share the good news of Christ's victory over death with the whole world. As we heard in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter proudly proclaimed, "God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses."

Just as he did on the road to Emmaus, our risen Lord reveals himself to **us** in the Scriptures, and in the breaking of the bread. At every holy Mass, Christ opens the Scriptures to us and the bread is broken, the bread that has become His true Body and true Blood. And so, as we absorb the Word of God and as we make our spiritual Communion, Jesus accompanies us on this road in the midst of our sorrows and joys, our confusions and our certainties, our fears and our moments of great courage throughout this crisis.

Once our Lord had revealed himself to his disciples on the road to Emmaus in the Scriptures and the Holy Eucharist, he vanished from their sight. And yet, he remained. He remained as that burning love in their hearts, a love that drove them to immediately get up *in the night* and return to the other disciples to share the good news.

Brothers and sisters, we are on a road we didn't plan to travel, making a journey we didn't want to make; a journey that seems overshadowed by confusion, fear, sorrow, suffering and even death. Although it may be difficult for us to recognize him now, Jesus is walking with us. Christ **is** in the person among us who serves and he is in the person among us who is being served. He is waiting for us in the Scriptures, and in our Communion (even spiritually) with his true Body and Blood, his real presence.

When we encounter the risen Christ there, his presence should burn within us. His love should ignite a desire to share him with everyone, especially with those among our family and friends who are not watching; who cannot yet recognize him, or who have forgotten his infinite love for us. Like the disciples who were compelled to turn back in the night on the road to Emmaus to announce the good news; like Peter who could not keep silent once he had encountered the risen Lord, we too must be driven to spread the news of Christ's victory over death.

Brothers and sisters, it is Easter and our risen Lord has revealed himself to us. He walks with us on this road. With renewed courage we are called to proclaim for all the world to hear, "God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses."