

A Message from Father Pinnisi

As we celebrate the Third Sunday of Easter, St. Luke in his account in chapter 24 records the events of the two followers of Jesus traveling on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It is a story familiar to us. The scene has these two men walking along and like everyone else they were discussing what had happened to Jesus only a couple of days before. They were lamenting the Lord's death and wondering how it could have been possible for the one they believed in as "Lord" and "Savior" to be gone. Imagine the profound sorrow they felt as they recounted for each other the events of the arrest, trial, flogging, and crucifixion of Christ. In this moment of grief, they forgot all the things Jesus foretold of his passion and death while he was with them.

The roads leading in and out of the city were always busy with people coming and going. A stranger walking alongside them inquires as to what they are discussing. Puzzled by his question, they ask him if he is the only person in Jerusalem that might not be aware of the events surrounding the death of Jesus. This stranger begins to unfold for them all the scriptures having to do with Christ and the mission he had in coming into the world. They were taken by this man's intimate knowledge of the scriptures and were consumed by what he had to say.

In verse 29, they reach the place to which they were going and this stranger appears to be going on further when they say to him; "*It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over. Stay with us. So, he went in and stayed with them.*" *As you might recall, in the breaking of the bread at the table with him in the midst of a meal their eyes seemed to be opened and they recognized that this stranger was Jesus himself after his death. At the moment they recognized him, he vanished from their sight and they ran back to the city frantically to tell the Apostles they had seen the Lord.*

Many Scripture scholars use these verses to speak of the rich eucharistic symbolism of their recognition in the breaking of the bread. Although there is, I believe another message for us as well. When the day is almost over and it seems to be getting dark, they ask him to come in and stay with them and he does. What an appropriate message in this gospel account for our present moment. So many are feeling fear and hopelessness during this pandemic. Others are grieving the loss of someone they love. In these vulnerable moments, we are even restricted from the physical closeness that can bring comfort to us and others. This gospel message is for you. The same Jesus who walked on that road to Emmaus after his death wants to come and stay with you. He wants to be the strength and consolation you need now. A faithful companion to be with you during these dark times.

Ask for the Lord to come and stay with you. Ask him to lift the veil from your eyes caused by fear, grief, and allow you to see him clearly right beside you. The joy of Easter comes from the knowledge that Christ is truly risen. His resurrection conquers anything that can separate us from him. There is joy and peace in remembering that.

I pray for you every single day and long for the time when we will be gathered as one around the Lord's table. May the power of the crucified and risen Jesus come and find its place in you.

Peace

Fr. Robert