

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER - A- MAY 4, 2014

"AND HE SAID TO THEM, "OH HOW FOOLISH YOU ARE! HOW SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE ALL THAT THE PROPHETS SPOKE"

YOU KNOW, OF COURSE, IF YOU'RE NOT READING THE SPORTS SECTION EVERY DAY - YOU'RE MISSING SOMETHING IMPORTANT!!!

MORE SPECIFICALLY, IF YOU'RE NOT READING THE ARTICLE BY TOM ARCHDEACON - YOU MISSING SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT---

ACTUALLY, HE DOESN'T WRITE AN ARTICLE EVERYDAY - PROBABLY ABOUT TWICE A WEEK - BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS IT...

IT'S AN HUMAN INTEREST ARTICLE - NOT SO MUCH ABOUT SPORTS - BUT ABOUT ATHLETES AND THEIR LIVES - THEIR LOVED ONES....

E.G. ON FRIDAY OF THIS WEEK HE WROTE AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "FRIENDSHIP'S FLAME BURNS THROUGH THE YEARS" ABOUT DANNY MCGEADY AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH KURT MURNEN....

THERE IS AN ACCOMPANYING PHOTO OF THEM WITH THEIR ALTER TEAMMATES IN 1996 CELEBRATING A VICTORY WHICH ENABLED THEM TO GO TO THE STATE TOURNAMENT IN COLUMBUS .

BOTH AT THAT TIME WERE ONLY JUNIORS ...

AS IT TURNED OUT ONLY THREE YEARS LATER KURT WOULD DIE OF BONE CANCER AT THE AGE OF 19.....

NOT ONLY THAT BUT IN 2007 DANNY'S WIFE - A MOTHER OF TWO - WAS DIAGNOSED WITH HODGKIN'S LYMPHOMA'S - AND SHE HAS SUCCESSFULLY BATTLED THE CANCER AND IT IS IN REMISSION....

SO THE ARTICLE IS ABOUT DANNY RUNNING FOR THE LEUKIMIA AND

LYMPHOMA SOCIETY MAN OF THE YEAR - WHICH IS AN ANNUAL FUND RAISING COMPETITION THAT CONCLUDES WITH A SILENT AUCTION AND DINNER AT SINCLAIR ON MAY 9TH.....

IT ALSO FEATURES THE ROLE OF THE UD BASKETBALL TEAM IN HELPING DANNY WITH A FUND RAISING EVENT - AN AUTOGRAPH SIGNING/ICE CREAM SOCIAL AT FLANAGAN'S PUB LAST WEEK.....

IN THE ARTICLE DANNY SAYS THAT "WITH KURT IN SOME WAYS IT'S GOTTEN HARDER FOR ME AS I'V GOTTEN OLDER...."I FEEL HE GOT CHEATED. I GOT CHEATED. MY KIDS GOT CHEATED. TO THEM HE'S UNCLE KURT BUT THEY NEVER GOT TO MEET HIM.....

DANNY MCGEADY IS WHAT OUR SCRIPTURE PASSAGE OF TODAY WOULD CALL "SLOW OF HEART"....

SLOW OF HEART.....MOST OF US HAVE BEEN THERE...HAVEN'T WE???

IN FACT, WE MIGHT BE THERE RIGHT NOW.....

WE'VE LOST SOMETHING SO VALUABLE THAT YOU KNOW IT WILL TAKE A LONG TIME AND A LOT OF HARD WORK TO GET OVER IT.....

YOU CERTAINLY DON'T NEED SOME FALSE HOPE SUGGESTING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE LOSS MIGHT BE RESTORED....

YOU ARE AFRAID TO HOPE BECAUSE HOPING WOULD ONLY SET YOU UP FOR MORE GRIEF AND DISAPPOINTMENT....

SO WE PROTECT OUR HEARTS IN SUCH A SITUATION....

WHEN LOVE HAS BROKEN YOUR HEART, YOU ARE SLOW OF HEART TO LOVE AGAIN.....

***THAT IS ALSO CERTAINLY THE SITUATION WITH THE DISCIPLES TODAY
IN OUR GOSPEL***

AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS THEY ARE FACING AN EMPTY FUTURE....

THEIR REASON FOR LIVING HAD DIED....

THEY HAD NO IDEA WHAT TO DO...

***THEY ARE LEAVING JERUSALEM BEHIND AND THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF
THE WEEKEND.....***

THE RISEN JESUS, UNRECOGNIZED, JOINS THEM.....

***HE LISTENS TO THEIR ACCOUNT OF THE EVENTS THAT HAVE LEFT THEM
SO DISTRAUGHT.....***

FINALLY, HE SAYS, "O FOOLISH MEN, AND SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE....

AND HE INTERPRETS THE SCRIPTURES FOR THEM....

AND EVENTUALLY AT SUPPER THEY FINALLY RECOGNIZE HIM.....

NOTICE JESUS DOES NOT SAY "SLOW OF MIND TO BELIEVE" EVEN

THOUGH WE THINK OF BELIEVING AS A FUNCTION OF THE MIND....

***I BELIEVE THIS GOSPEL IS TELLING US THAT FAITH IS A MATTER OF THE
HEART.....***

THIS GOSPEL STORY IS FULL OF HEART....

***THIS GOSPEL STORY IS TELLING US THAT THERE IS NO FAITH WITHOUT
STRUGGLE....***

NO LOVE WITHOUT PAIN, NO LIFE WITHOUT LOSS.....

***THE BROKEN HEART, ONCE MENDED, CAN BE STRONGER THAN
BEFORE....***

THE HEALING PROCESS OFTEN RESULTS IN A BROKEN PLACE BECOMING MORE DURABLE THAN IT WAS BEFORE....

EMOTIONALLY AND SPIRITUALLY, AS WELL, WE ARE OFTEN MADE STRONGER BY OUR EXPERIENCES OF SUFFERING AND OF FAILURE....

BUT IT CERTAINLY IS NOT EASY -

THIS STORY CAN ALSO SERVE AS A METAPHOR FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD....

FOR WHEN WE FEEL LIKE WE HAVE LOST OUR WAY, LOST OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD...

NOTICE THAT JESUS WAS MORE WITH THEM ON THEIR GRIEVING JOURNEY THAN WHEN THEY ACTUALLY SAW AND RECOGNIZED HIM AND FINALLY BELIEVED....

ULTIMATELY, THIS GOSPEL PASSAGE INVITES US TO EXAMINE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD...

OUR WILLINGNESS TO RESPOND TO THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN OUR LIVES....

THE CALL TO FAITH IN OUR GOD INVARIABLY INVOLVES DEGREES OF UNCERTAINTY AND RISK....

WE NEVER KNOW ALL THAT IS INVOLVED IN SAYING YES TO THE RISEN CHRIST....

WE NEED BRAVE HEARTS....

FAITH IS NOT A CERTAINTY, BUT A LEAP.....

HENRI NOUWEN COMPARED IT TO THE ACROBAT ON THE SWINGING TRAPEZE LEAPING OUT IN MID-AIR TO EVENTUALLY GRASP ON TO THE

OUTSTRETCHED HANDS OF THE PARTNER....

OR PERHAPS WE MIGHT THINK OF THE CHILD'S FACE WHEN

ENCOURAGED TO JUMP INTO THE WATER AND THE OUTSTRETCHED

ARMS OF THE PARENT...

IT IS A MIXTURE OF EAGERNESS AND HESITANCY, EXCITEMENT AND

FEAR.....

A LEAP REQUIRES A COURAGEOUS HEART

AND OUR HEARTS ARE CAPABLE OF GREAT COURAGE.....

FAITH AND COURAGE BELONG TOGETHER.....

AND ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF LOSS AND DIFFICULTY - WHEN WE ARE

SLOW OF HEART - WE NEED BOTH COURAGE AND FAITH.....

LET US TAKE FOR OUR MODELS THE TWO DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO

EMMAUS....

THEY LISTENED TO THE WORD OF GOD, THE SACRED SCRIPTURES AND

THEN BROKE BREAD TOGETHER - LEADING TO THE TRANSFORMATION

OF THEIR SLOW HEART..THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THE RISEN CHRIST - AND

THEIR GROWTH IN COURAGE AND FAITH

WE TOO HAVE HEARD THE WORD OF GOD AND WILL BE BREAKING

BREAD TOGETHER...JUST AS THEY DID....

LET US PRAY THAT IT WILL TRANSFORM OUR "SLOW HEARTS" - LEADING

TO AN EXPERIENCE OF THE RISEN CHRIST AND A GROWTH IN COURAGE

AND FAITH