

Emmaus

3rd Sunday of Easter (Luke 24:35-48)

Today is the 3rd Sunday of the Easter Season, and our gospel narrative occurs on the heels of the famous encounter of Jesus with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

If you recall, that these two disciples, dejected by the death of their would-be Messiah, are walking home very downhearted at the death of hope. We are told how they were so depressed and disorientated by Jesus' death that they were giving up all interest in the dead Master and were returning home at the first opportunity. The Apostles were no better since Good Friday. They had remained behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. They had no hope left. They would have left Jerusalem, too, it not for the story brought by Mary Magdalene that the body of Jesus had been taken from the tomb.

The road to Emmaus stretched about 7 miles from Jerusalem. These men were on their way home to get away from all the events that happened the week before...a place (perhaps) where they could forget about the loss of their leader and start over.

Each of us in our own personal history has probably traveled our own road to Emmaus several times during our lifetime...a place to get away from some traumatic event and find a place of solace and comfort. I know I have been on the road myself many times before.

In Luke's gospel (Luke 24:13-35), we hear:

Suddenly, Jesus himself came along and joined them and began walking beside them. But they didn't know who he was because they were prevented from recognizing him.

"You seem to be in a deep discussion about something," he said. "What are you so concerned about?" They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days." "What things?" Jesus asked. "The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth," they said. "He was a prophet who did wonderful miracles. He was a mighty teacher, highly regarded by both God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders arrested him and handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had thought he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. That all happened three days ago.

You remember the rest of the story, right? Jesus opens to these two the scriptures showing the things concerning himself. And so powerful is the encounter that they prevail upon this stranger (Jesus incognito) to break bread with them, and it is in the breaking of the bread that Jesus is revealed to them for who he is.

Now we are ready for today's gospel:

The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how **Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of bread.** While they were still speaking about this, he stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

But the disciples were startled and terrified and thought that they were seeing a ghost. Then he said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do questions arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see, because a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

While they were still incredulous with joy and were amazed, he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of baked fish; he took it and ate it in front of them. Jesus certainly showed them he was still human. Jesus wanted his Apostles to be authentic witnesses to this reality.

The meals that Jesus shared with them after his Resurrection unveil for us the significance of the Eucharist. Our celebration of Eucharist is an encounter with Jesus, through the Word and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. As Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses to what Scriptures foretold, our celebration of the Eucharist commissions us. We are sent to announce the good news of Jesus.

"Mission Impossible" is a spy story with a lot of mystery and excitement. On the old television show, it always began the same way -- secret agent Jim Phelps would receive a tape recorded message which said, "Jim, your mission, if you choose to accept it is..." and then it would give him an assignment which seemed impossible to accomplish. Of course, he always accepted the assignment. He would then choose a group of agents -- each one with a special talent -- who would help him to accomplish his mission. As you might guess, the super-secret agents of the "Impossible Mission Force" were always able to complete their mission.

(You young people about to be confirmed): You and I (and all of us gathered here in this church) have been given a mission by Jesus. Our mission is to tell the whole world about Jesus' love and forgiveness. **Now, that would seem to be an impossible mission for a group of young men and women about to receive Confirmation, but it isn't. You are now spiritually mature young adults and are about to embark on the great mission that Jesus has given to all of us.**

You are a vital part of the life of this faith community (QAC). **You are the present, you are the future and you are the RIGHT NOW!** of our Church, and I, for one, am very proud of you – as are all of us gathered here. Don't let anyone ever take that away from you. Hopefully, you will travel the road to Jerusalem where Jesus is waiting for you more so than to Emmaus where you seek to get away from it all.

Because, you see, we don't have to accomplish our mission alone. The Church, like the "Impossible Mission Force," is made up of many people....many parts, all one body. Each of us has been given special talents to help accomplish the mission. If we choose to accept our mission, then "Mission Impossible" becomes "Mission Possible."

If you are you willing to accept your mission, then may God bless you, may Jesus always be at your side to lead you on your journey and may the Holy Spirit inspire you with courage to carry out that mission.

[\(Excerpts from Canon Dr. Daniel Meynen and Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M\)](#)

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