

Third Sunday of Easter “A” Cycle April 30, 2017

Many years ago, when I was in the seminary we had some free time after supper. Since we didn’t have much in the way of entertainment, many of us would walk the backroad and talk about many things. It was a way of supporting one another in our vocations.

Not too long ago, walking was a primary way to travel. Many would go on pilgrimages, walking great distances to sacred places.

In today’s Gospel, from Saint Luke, we heard proclaimed the story of a walking journey that became a pilgrimage. This story is one of the most beautiful accounts of the appearance of the Risen Jesus to two of his disciples.

On that first Easter Sunday, these two were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a distance of seven miles. This would probably take about three to four hours. They were disappointed and discouraged over the events of the past few days in Jerusalem, during which Jesus had been crucified. They had high hopes that he was the long-awaited Messiah. And now apparently these hopes were destroyed.

Joining them in their walk, although not recognized, was Jesus. Most likely the reason they didn’t recognize Jesus was because of their discouragement, which they shared with him. Jesus then began to instruct them pointing out the Scriptures which foretold how the Messiah would suffer. Later these disciples would remark how their hearts were burning within them as he opened the meaning of the Scriptures to them.

When they finally reached their destination, they implored this stranger: “stay with us, for it nearly evening and the day is almost over.” When he broke the bread their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus, who then disappeared. This is a clear reference to the Holy Eucharist. The two then immediately hurried back to Jerusalem to share their good news.

This story explains how we too, twenty-first disciples of Jesus, encounter him in our walk, our journey, through life. This happens especially at Mass. Jesus instructs us as we listen to his Word proclaimed in the Scriptures. We are nourished by his Body and Blood in the Eucharist. We also encounter him in the faith we share, in the Church community.

Remember that the two disciples, upon recognizing Jesus, walked back to share their experience with the disciples in Jerusalem, where they were given the same message: “the Lord has truly been raised.”

Our journey through this earthly life leads to eternal life and is really a pilgrimage. To sustain us, we rely upon the Lord’s Word of Scripture as understood and taught by our Church. We come every Sunday to be nourished by the Lord’s Body and Blood in the Eucharist. We also need each other’s support and encouragement as his Church, just as my calling to the priesthood was supported by my brother seminarians.

May our prayer be always: “Stay with us, Lord, for life passes quickly, teach us, feed us, and gather us together.”