

Third Sunday of Easter – April 26, 2020

The road to Emmaus is the journey to faith and life

In the Bible, the book Genesis, and throughout our Salvation History, God has been creative in creating the Universe (Genesis), guiding His creation by sending prophets and kings, learned people, and finally His only begotten Son – Jesus Christ.

In times of crisis and trials, like this global COVID 19 pandemic, ***we, too, are called to be creative in our desire to connect with God and to our family and community.*** Since, all public Masses are suspended and the Executive Order by the State to Stay-At-Home is in place – we cannot come to Mass physically. Yet, we need to be creative in our prayer and building and strengthening our relationship.

I hope and pray you are all taking care of yourselves: physical, emotional, psychological, mental, and certainly not the least, spiritually. There is no doubt that during this global COVID-19 pandemic, ***we are sometimes discouraged and sorrowful.***

Like many of us, who are discouraged from this pandemic, Cleopas and the other disciple felt downcast as they journey towards Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). **The story of the Road to Emmaus shows us the importance of faith and the Eucharist (the Breaking Bread) in our journey of faith.** Let us examine the Gospel (Luke 24:13-35) briefly:

First, Jesus himself drew near and walked with Cleopas and the other disciple, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus. **What was it that prevented the disciples from knowing Jesus?** Maybe frustrations, discouragement, too much pain and suffering, and other things can hinder any of us from accepting Jesus. They were overwhelmed by pain of losing their Master. Just a week ago, they saw Jesus acclaimed as King. Then, Jesus was betrayed and crucified. They felt defeated. **But, one that stood out the most was the disciples' lack of focus on Jesus.**

They were too preoccupied with their worries and frustrations, and they failed to recognize Jesus in their journey to Emmaus.

Secondly, Jesus explained to the two disciples the necessity of the passion and death of Christ to fulfill the scriptures. Jesus says, ***“Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”*** Then beginning with Moses

and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures.

When we feel lost and downcast, let us turn to Jesus in the Scriptures and allow Jesus to soothe and comfort us with His words.

Finally, the Breaking of the Bread of Jesus was the catalyst for the disciples to awaken from slumber to new life. Saint Luke writes: while he (Jesus) was with them at the table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.”

The Eucharist allows us to see clearly with faith amidst confusion and discouragement. That is why even though these days we can't be communally present at the Holy Mass, still, every time we follow it on the internet or TV, don't we all feel comfort and hope in our hearts? Amidst this global pandemic, **(1) let us focus on Jesus, (2) allow God's words in the Scriptures to soothe us in times of crisis, and (3) partake in the Eucharist even virtually and spiritually on our live-streaming via the internet.**

I want to end my homily/ reflection with a Prayer of Solidarity during this Global Corona-Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

COVID 19: A Prayer of Solidarity

**For all who have contracted coronavirus,
We pray for care and healing.**

**For those who are particularly vulnerable,
We pray for safety and protection.**

**For all who experience fear or anxiety,
We pray for peace of mind and spirit.**

**For affected families who are facing difficult decisions between food on the
table or public safety,**

We pray for policies that recognize their plight.

**For those who do not have adequate health insurance,
We pray that no family will face financial burdens alone.**

**For those who are afraid to access care due to immigration status,
We pray for recognition of the God-given dignity of all.
For our brothers and sisters around the world,
We pray for shared solidarity.
For public officials and decisionmakers,
We pray for wisdom and guidance.
Father, during this time may your Church be a sign of hope, comfort and
love to all.
Grant peace.
Grant comfort.
Grant healing.
Be with us, Lord.
Amen.**

Let us be creative so that we may have a greater appreciation of the “Breaking of the Bread” – the Eucharist, in our lives. Amen!