

3rd Sunday Easter Year "A"

Stay with Us, Lord!

May 3-4, 2014 Cathedral of Saint Paul

Readings: Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

The account of the appearance of Jesus on the Road to Emmaus is one of the most engaging in all of the Scriptures. The Gospel account indicates that the distance involved was sixty stadia. A roman *stadium* equals the length of two of our football fields. So sixty 'stadia' was just about seven miles. Figuring on the average walking speed of able-bodied adults, the journey would have taken at least 2 ½ hours. How would you like to spend an entire afternoon with Our Risen Lord?

So why did they fail to recognize him? Jesus had foretold his resurrection but his death had erased that from the minds of his followers. They were so shattered that they had forgotten what he had promised. They firmly believed that Jesus was dead. They made reference to all the things that had happened in Jerusalem that week when Jesus asked them what they were discussing amongst themselves. Jesus, quite coyly asked a leading question, "What sort of things?"

The disciples took the bait - hook, line and sinker. He then explained to them the Scriptures, going from one end to the other - the Torah, the prophets, the Psalms. Truly, Christ is the goal and the center of all the Scriptures. Arriving at Emmaus in late afternoon, they invited the stranger to eat with them, and only then were their eyes opened in the Eucharist. Note that the passive voice is used - faith comes from God.

By means of their concern for a stranger they discovered Jesus Christ, at which time he began to live in them. As Saint Augustine once observed, the apostles experienced first hand the truth that, "It is a greater thing to have Christ in your heart than in your house."¹

¹ Saint Augustine, (Sermon 232,7)

We mustn't underestimate that the death of Jesus both scattered his disciples and shattered their hopes and dreams. They *had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*. They saw the cross as defeat and could not comprehend the meaning of the empty tomb until the Lord appeared to them and gave them understanding.

Jesus chided the disciples on the road to Emmaus for their *slowness of heart* to believe what the scriptures had said concerning the Messiah. They did not recognize the risen Jesus until he had broken bread with them. This raises important questions for us too. Do we recognize the Lord in his Word and in the *breaking of the bread*, the Eucharistic sacrifice?

A sign in the entranceway of an English castle open to the public reads, "It is the duty of the host to make his guests feel **at home**. It is the duty of the guests to remember that they are not."² To our first communicants, please know that Jesus is not only a guest in your heart and soul. He wants to make it his home. WE are the guests invited to the great banquet of the Lamb, our Savior Jesus Christ. Not only do we make Jesus feel at home and welcome Him, but we also pray for the grace to make our heart a home for the Lord to live in, each and every day.

How often do we fail to recognize the Lord when he speaks to our hearts and opens his mind to us? The Risen Lord is ever ready to speak his word to us and to give us understanding of his ways. And do not forget the zeal of those same disciples after their breakthrough. They quickly set out again to Jerusalem, another seven miles, and this time at night! Their excitement could not be contained. Can we hear their voices or see the excitement in their eyes?

² *Reader's Digest*, March, 1983

Can we appreciate what a difference of just a few hours made in their lives? Let us pray for the same zeal and excitement in our lives- zeal for His Word, zeal for his presence in our midst and the desire to share what we have found with others.

May the Lord Jesus Christ open our eyes to recognize His presence within us and our minds to understand the truth of His saving Word. May He nourish our hearts with His life-giving word and with the Bread of Life.