

April 26, 2020

Dear Parishioners

The gospel this weekend seems particularly fitting for us in the midst of this pandemic. It's a very long reading, chapter 24 of Luke's gospel, verses 13 to 35; you might find it helpful to follow along in your bible. It begins with two of Jesus' disciples, Cleopas and perhaps, his wife walking home to Emmaus on "the first day of the week," three days after Jesus' crucifixion. We learn later in the reading that the Eleven (the 12 minus Judas) and other followers are still in Jerusalem. But these two are presumably on their way home, depressed no doubt, having seen the One in whom they placed their hopes treated brutally and killed.

When Jesus joins them on their journey (though they are prevented from recognizing him), they speak admiringly of his effect on their lives. He was "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" and "we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel." They tell him of the women finding the tomb empty **that very morning** and seeing a vision of angels who tell them that he is alive. Some men then go to the tomb and find it as the women have described. (Important, since the testimony of women was not considered trustworthy in their culture.)

Jesus then interprets for them many of the Old Testament teachings referring to himself and they invite him to spend the night. When they're at table with him, he takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to them. "With that, their eyes are opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight."

Maybe you're like me and not hard-pressed financially or emotionally like so many of the people desperate to provide for their families or the front-line responders and others now at particular risk. But it occurred to me this morning that I was feeling like the two on their way back home, depressed due to the changes in our lives that "shelter in place" has brought. I need to remember that the Lord is still with us, that He has risen and has given us the Spirit to continue to guide us and comfort us. May that same Holy Spirit urge us to reach out to those who may be lonely or in particular need.

Sr. Seral