

Homily April 10, 2005

Easter III April 10, 2005 St. Luke 24:13-35

**“Grant O Lord that thy word only may be spoken, and thy word only received.
+In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”**

“Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He (Jesus) interpreted to them the things about Himself in all the scriptures.”...Verse 27

I...Have you ever wondered about those chance encounters? You know, the ones where your not really sure how under any other given set of circumstances you would ever meet this person who has become your best friend, your husband or wife, your employer...or even your parish priest? A Benedictine Monk tells the story of a young boy who set off for a day of play in the park, all loaded up with his lunch in his backpack. After a hard day of play, as boys are want to do, he began looking for a picnic table to have his lunch. All seemed to be taken, except for one table that had only one person sitting at it, and she was an older woman. So he politely asked if he could share the table with her and seeing her accepting grandmother like smile, he offered her part of his lunch, which she accepted. Back home the boys parents asked him: “so how did your day go?” He beamed and said it was great and he had lunch with God. “Oh?” they asked. “Yes” he said- but I did not know that God was a grandmother and so old. Also having returned home to her family, the old woman was asked by her son “Mother how was your day today?” She said: “It was awesome and I had lunch with God, but I never knew God was such a young boy.”

II...The point is that every chance encounter is and encounter with God. The disciples discover this when they meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus in today’s gospel. In their encounter they discuss, interpret and converse about the Scriptures (a sort of mini-Bible Study)- St. Luke in fact uses the word ‘homileo’ – or homily/sermon – to describe this event. So we have a Homily or Sermon at Mass on Sundays, where we seek to discuss or interpret the Scripture readings just heard. St. Luke does this very intentionally, to show us WHY the early Christian Community worshipped God by celebrating the Eucharist. It is a very carefully worded story. It does NOT say that they just suddenly recognized Jesus...but that He became known to them IN the Breaking of the Bread (i.e. IN Word and Sacrament). The point is that while we may encounter God just about anytime or anywhere, it is a sure thing you WILL when you come to Mass on Sunday. So if you can’t experience God anywhere else, or feel he’s far off, or you know of others struggling with where God is in the midst of this crazy thing we call life- COME TO MASS!

III...St. Luke drives home this point to the Christians he writes the Gospel for. That Community of Faith, like ours, encounters Jesus Christ in Worship- in Word and Sacrament, in the sacred Meal we call the Mass. This is what it means to be Baptized- I am a Christian in Community, not in isolation, not alone in my living room with a TV Religious program, but in a Family, God's Family of Faith. And families need to find time to share together and eat together...so we celebrate at Mass the Lord's own Supper. You today can make the same discovery that the disciples made on the Road to Emmaus. Jesus: Here and Now in the Breaking of Bread, in Word and Sacrament.

IV...St. Paul's by-the-Lake is called of God to continue this work of seeing Jesus. First in the Mass every Sunday together, then as we are sent out into the world to see Him in the context of our own life, in our daily living. At Emmaus, what started as an ordinary day's journey, an ordinary conversation and an ordinary meal- became and EXTRA-ordinary event of the Resurrection. The true strength of our Faith is found with-in the Christian Community of that Faith. For in such communities we continue to hear Jesus and the Apostles speak to us, the Church.

THERE, 'a chance encounter' becomes an encounter with God. It may be with an old woman or with a young boy...or just about anyone. From such encounters, from each other, the strength of support comes to us and other believers. In our common prayer we unite in Faith, that Jesus our Lord may be worshipped, hallowed and adored in the Breaking of Bread.

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