

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Cycle A, April 30, 2017

In the various journeys that I have gone on in my life, I have discovered that it is far easier to travel with some companions than to travel alone. For example, the first time that I made the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, I was alone. The second and third times, I walked with Fr. Peter Jaramillo and my brother. It was a lot easier.

If you are traveling with someone else, they may notice something that you have overlooked in your rush to leave, such as an umbrella just in case it rains. If you are in a busy airport terminal, they can watch over your luggage while you slip away for a moment to go to the restroom. Above all, they can provide conversation and companionship, so that you don't feel so alone. It is easier to travel with some companions.

The two disciples of Jesus in today's gospel story are traveling on a journey. They are fleeing the city of Jerusalem, to the safety of the small village of Emmaus. After all, they just recently saw their Master arrested and put to a hideous death. Maybe, the same thing could happen to them. At any rate, there was no longer any reason for them to stay in Jerusalem. With Jesus dead, their hopes were dashed to the ground.

They had heard outlandish rumors that he had risen from the dead, but who could believe that?

In the midst of their despondency, they meet up with this stranger on the road. Through conversation with him, they begin to understand that Jesus' death was all part of God's plan. He interprets the Scriptures for them, to help them piece together these recent confusing events of their life, to make sense of it all. Finally, they stop for supper. When he breaks the bread, they suddenly realize that it has been Jesus all along. He has been walking with them, and talking with them. And now, he shares a meal with them.

Jesus does the same thing with us. He is constantly walking beside us, even though we do not see him. He is speaking to us through the Scriptures, the readings of the Bible, to help us understand God's plan for us. As we listen to him, as we open our hearts and our minds to him, he helps us to piece together the

confusing events of our lives, to make sense of them. And he breaks bread with us in the Eucharist, where he gives himself to us as food and as drink. That is the moment when we can encounter the Risen Christ, when we can see him with the eyes of faith.

After the two disciples in the gospel story recognize the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, they turn around and return to Jerusalem, to announce what they have seen to the other disciples. That moment of recognition causes them to change the direction of their lives.

Similarly, when we recognize the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, in the Eucharist, that moment of recognition gives direction to our lives. It can be a real eye-opener. It can enable us also to share with other the good news that Jesus is risen, that he is living in our midst. We can tell others what has happened to us on the road of life, and how Jesus has been made known to us in the breaking of the bread. We are not alone.