



Ask, Father James:

What is the Spiritual Message in the: "On the Road to Emmaus..."

The Emmaus narrative in Luke 24:13-40 is the Gospel text for this third Sunday of Easter (A). The story begins with sharing a story on the journey. Last week, Rod asked us to share our stories. Thanks to many who did. The Emmaus travellers were shared the story of their resurrection faith and it ended with shared meal and recognition of the Lord.

In the text; While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them; *What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?* They shared their painful and agonizing story with "Jesus the stranger." The Emmaus story in this weekend's gospel invites us to ask, Which of our sufferings are we too talking about in these days? Perhaps, Covid-19!

Just like in the Emmaus journey, Jesus walks with us and listens. Like he did for Cleopas and his friend, He opens our eyes to understand God's plan. The text says; "then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures." The main lesson here is that in the times of the great sadness and uncertainty about the future, God journeys with us on the roads we undertake and speaks to us daily on the journey.

Towards the end of the journey, those two invited "Jesus the stranger in." Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over, they said. Easter is more than the annual celebration of the end of the Lenten journey. It is a celebration that the Lord journeys with us and is with us. Never abandoning us. Our faith is deepened as he journeys with us.

Jesus went in to stay with them. And at the supper table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him... They said to each other, Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us? We too could experience a holy heartburn on the journey of pain and uncertainty. With our pounding hearts, burning hearts, wounded hearts, He can open and touch our minds to understand scriptures and we too like them can become believers. Before they recognized Jesus, they were too preoccupied and too busy to recognize the presence of the Lord, despite his presence all through the journey.

Their hearts burned within them when they realized this fact. They became transformed and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. From now until Pentecost, our singing of the great Easter Alleluia with burning hearts is our longing as we await the end of Covid-19 and we can again begin to participate in this banquet of eternal life again.

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