

Easter 3 Sun Yr A. 200226

R Acts.2:1-14,22-33; Psalm 16:1-2,5,7-11; I Peter 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35

C/W.Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Ps116:1-3,10-17; 1 Pet 1:17-23; Lk 24:13-35

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILIAR. LUKE 24:13-35.

Today's Gospel tells about two disciples who walked and talked with Jesus for at least an hour, on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus without their ever suspecting His true identity.

This took place in the evening of that first Easter Sunday. Jesus asked them what they were discussing and why they looked so downcast. They poured out their story of Jesus--how He had brought hope into their lives, and now that hope had been shattered by His crucifixion.

A rumour was circulating that He had risen from the dead, and they couldn't believe it.

Jesus listened patiently to their story and then began to open the scriptures to them . He showed them that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and die. While He talked, the miles slipped by and they arrived at their destination.

The day was far spent, and it was time for the evening meal. They begged their Companion to stay with them and He graciously accepted.

I prefer the older word 'Abide' – stay means to remain – abide means to live with! – Remember that beautiful hymn by Henry Lyte , 'Abide with me' Always sung at Cup Finals. If we ask Jesus in, He won't just stay around us; He will live and share our lives with us forever!

As they reclined at the table, Jesus took some bread, said the blessing, broke it and shared it with them, the Eucharist. Suddenly, and only then, they recognised Him.

This event is sealed in the memory of the Church, because it indicates the two primary ways that Christ makes Himself known to His disciples. One is through Scripture, and the other is through the Eucharist.

But what strikes me is the simplicity and the familiarity of the entire event. How often there is the tendency to look for Jesus in the spectacular and unusual.

We have never seen Him, but we are quite certain that if we ever did, it would never be in a place so familiar as our own home.

Familiar things, places and people play a vital role in our lives. In hours of despair or when their heart is breaking, what people have needed most is something or someone familiar.

They will go to a familiar place or turn to a trusted friend. They may open an old photograph album, and thumb through it slowly, pausing occasionally to wipe away a tear.

At a time like that, what people need, rather than want, are the familiar hymns and Scripture readings. When a child is going to bed at night and feels a little insecure, what does he want? Probably the oldest and scruffiest toy he owns.

He wants to be told the same old story he knows off by heart. There is strength and comfort in the familiar.

It is to the shame of our society, that hymns, Scripture passages and even basic prayers are not taught or learned. They are missing so much that would **really help!**

The Two Disciples in today's Gospel found themselves in a place of overwhelming sadness. It was one of the darkest days of their lives. Jesus had died, and it was as if the sun had fallen out of the sky.

They spoke of hope only in the past tense. 'We had hoped that He was the one.' Jesus was dead and their hopes had died along with Him.

The thing that renewed their hopes and turned their lives around was a familiar gesture - the Eucharist, the breaking of bread. Suddenly their eyes were opened and recognition flooded in.

He was not a stranger at all. He was their friend Jesus, they had known, loved and trusted.

Jesus clearly understood the importance of the familiar. It is true that He was a blazer of trails, a thinker of new thoughts. He was in the best sense of the word, a progressive, but He recognised the need for stability and permanence.

That's why He provided His Church with a few things that would never change, namely the reading of Scripture and the breaking of bread. In other words the Eucharist or Mass.

The Mass has stood at the centre of Christian worship from the beginning and will do so to the end. Jesus assured that place of permanence when He said, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' It is in the most familiar and ancient rite of Christian worship that Jesus wishes us to meet Him.

Sadly, in these days of the Corona virus pandemic we can't gather in our iconic church building to share Eucharist together. But we are still Church and we gather remotely by electronic means.

The Risen Jesus is totally in Heaven, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. He is with us spiritually always, because God is 'omnipresent' and the Holy Spirit brings Jesus into our hearts. But he comes to us in a wonderful way through the Sacrament, as in the Incarnation, his full humanity and divinity.

Although you cannot receive The Lord Jesus sacramentally you can make a spiritual communion. We do this by lifting our hearts to him, and by desire, receive the Lord, almost as if you were receiving His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity within the sacrament.

In our spiritual lives, The Saints encourage us to use our imagination in prayer, Especially St Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises. This is not to create fantasies but perceiving beyond our physical limitations, The greater realities of God.

Like millions of others, we will find Christ in the familiar. That's why we are doing these broadcasts. If we approach these celebrations with open hearts, may we along with the two disciples be able to add, ***'Did not our hearts burn within us.'*** ***Amen!***