

## ***“Made Known in the Breaking of the Bread”***

I wish you could all sit in on our Catechesis classes – they are truly enjoyable (for the most part!). This past Wednesday we had this Gospel reading as part of our study – and, can you guess, which part of the text captured their attention?!?

There were actually two parts. First of all, how could they not “recognize” Jesus as He walked alongside them – with the holes from the nails and the spear? That one’s easy – Jesus kept them from recognizing Him. He does this on purpose.

Which leads to the most incredible thing – that when their eyes are finally opened, sitting at table in the Emmaus house – and they see and recognize Jesus – He becomes “invisible” to them, He vanishes from their sight! WHY!!!! Why would Jesus do that – on purpose???

Well, Jesus is catechizing those two disciples – even as He is catechizing us today – teaching all who would walk the road with Jesus in this world.

Life has been turned upside-down for these two disciples. They’re confused about all that has happened – they don’t know what to think. They’re just plain tired, too tired to think, to figure it all out.

Jesus comes up and begins walking alongside of them – and even though they don’t recognize Him – it’s not any less true, that Jesus is with them. And when He asks them what they’re talking about – they must have thought – “who is this guy ... he doesn’t have a clue about what’s going on ... I guess we’ll have to teach him.”

But their hopelessness is evident. This Jesus of Nazareth – he showed some promise, but then ended up dead. We’d hoped He was the One to redeem Israel (the Messiah). And on this third day – nothing but chaos. The women didn’t find the body in the tomb, and “even” had some crazy talk about seeing angels who said Jesus is alive. When Peter and John checked things out, a body they did not see (either dead, or alive).

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Jesus catechizes these disciples – He opens the Scriptures to them – connecting the dots from the promises of the Savior in the Old Testament – with all that has happened in these past days to this Jesus of Nazareth (to Himself). “All that you’ve experienced? God says that it was necessary!”

As I said before, it’d been a long day – a long week at that. These disciples are tired, exhausted – physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. When they arrive home, they graciously invite this man who had been teaching them to come inside. “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” Who knows, maybe this fellow had had a long week too.

“So He went in to stay with them. When He was at TABLE with them, He TOOK the bread and BLESSED and BROKE it and GAVE it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. And He VANISHED from their sight.”

WHAT??? They finally recognize that it’s Jesus with them – and He vanishes!!! WHY???

Jesus does this – for those two disciples – and “for you.” In all the chaos – in this seemingly hopeless, defeated life – in our ever increasing, “I have to SEE it to believe it” Thomas-like-unbelief --- our Lord Jesus Christ is loving us to the end.

He lovingly prepares us – giving us something to hold onto – so that in our days we may know the truth – we might have rest – we might live in His peace.

With His crucifixion, death and resurrection now complete – Jesus is preparing for His ascension into heaven – preparing His disciples for living in the post-Ascension days.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, before His Ascension, Jesus promises His disciples, saying – "Behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." In St. Mark's Gospel we learn that – after Jesus was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God – He worked with His disciples and confirmed the message they preached by the miracles He performed through them.

Just like the disciples walking the road to Emmaus – so His future followers will not be able to see their Lord who walks with them. The Holy Scriptures will continue to point us to Jesus – they will reveal not only that He is risen from the dead – but that He is with us always.

In the "breaking of the bread" – the eyes of those Emmaus disciples were opened to see that Jesus was sitting at Table with them – but He vanished from their sight. They were left – not with a visual – but with His Word and His Supper.

As we sit at Table with Jesus – receiving the Lord's Supper, our eyes do not see Him – He is invisible to our eyes – but His Word reveals what is true.

Into the chaos of our hopeless, defeated, tired lives – comes the resurrected Jesus – giving us His resurrected Body and Blood – so that we might have His rest and His peace.

In the breaking of the bread – it is revealed to us that Jesus is no longer in the tomb – He is risen – He lives – and He dwells with you. In the breaking of the bread, the resurrected Christ proclaims that your sin is atoned for and your death defeated. In the breaking of the bread – Christ walks the road with you – and through this tangible Sacrament, you see that He is "for you" personally.

Dearly beloved – this Sacrament is truly a great mystery – for in the breaking of the bread – Jesus is hidden, so that you might believe that He is with you! Indeed, the resurrected Christ comes in to sit at Table with you today – to give you His rest and His peace.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! [He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!]