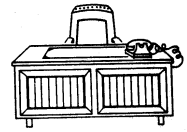


3rd Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2023



From the Desk of
Fr. Romanus

Dear Parishioners,

Sunday Reflection:

In this Sunday's gospel, we read about Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. The question is: Is it possible for one to walk with Jesus and still not recognize him? Absolutely! Certainly, the two disciples were preoccupied with the narrative about the events in Jerusalem pertaining to Jesus. The crucifixion and death of Jesus left them downcast and pretty burdened with sorrow. Their preoccupation with the passion prevented them from recognizing and celebrating the resurrection. Had they believed the report of the women at the tomb, their sadistic disposition would have given way to enthusiastic and spontaneous celebration. Nonetheless, they will join the esteemed group of eyewitnesses to the resurrection.

A popular theologian, Bernard Lonergan, wrote about a method for gaining true knowledge. This method consists of a four stage process he called the "fundamental imperatives," namely: 1. Be attentive, 2. Be intelligent, 3. Be reasonable, and 4. Be responsible. He said the first step is very important because it sets the stage for the others. Being attentive involves utilizing the senses to collect data from the world around us. It means paying attention to our surroundings and picking up information about people and things around us. Hence, if the two disciples on the road to Emmaus had taken this first step seriously, they would have recognized "the stranger" as the risen Lord.

Similarly, we have to be attentive to our surroundings to ensure that we do not miss opportunities to encounter the Risen Lord. We ought to pay attention to the stranger, the poor, the elderly, the sick, the homeless, the imprisoned, and all who are in need around us. Ministry to people in need hinges on our ability to recognize the Lord whom they represent. Take time to know them and listen to their stories in a compassionate and non-judgmental manner. We cannot afford to be so preoccupied with our personal problems that we fail to engage the people around us, especially those in need. If the two disciples had not been absorbed in their personal grief and feelings of loss at what happened to Jesus, they might have recognized the risen Lord as he engaged them on that road to Emmaus.

However, they deserve credit for their gracious hospitality to this stranger. Their hospitality was rewarded with a revelation of the risen Lord. During the breaking of bread, it was as if scales fell from their eyes and they recognized the Lord as he uttered those solemn words at their dinner table. It was then that they recalled the events of the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist. Likewise, we ought to be attentive during liturgical celebrations to ensure that we recognize the Lord with whom we break bread.

As a community of faith, one cannot say enough about the importance of hospitality. It is clearly reflected in our mission statement which describes us as "a welcoming open community of diverse disciples of Christ..." Our extended sign of peace during the celebration of the Eucharist is a good example. We also strive in many other ways to be a welcoming community. It is very important that we retain our welcoming disposition since in welcoming strangers we welcome Christ. If the two disciples on the road to Emmaus had not been hospitable to "the stranger" they would have missed the revelation that followed.

Have a great week!

Fr. Romanus