

Easter 3A 2017

*“Going the Wrong Way”*

The disciples were going the wrong way! They should have been going to the Jerusalem, the city where Jesus had been crucified. They should have been going to Jerusalem to meet their risen Lord. But they were filled with fear and anxiety. They were too confused and distraught to go to Jerusalem. And so they were leaving Jerusalem rather than going to Jerusalem. They were walking away from the crucifixion rather than going to their risen Lord.

But as they were walking away from Jerusalem, Jesus was accompanying them, even though they did not recognize him. There he was, risen and alive, in their midst, walking and speaking with them, but they could not recognize him because they were going in the wrong way. They were going away from Jerusalem rather than to Jerusalem.

At first they thought the stranger who companied them was uninformed. How could he be so ignorant of what had happened in Jerusalem these past days? But as he accompanied them, he began to explain the scriptures to them. And as he explained the scriptures to them, their hearts were on fire. He opened their minds to understand that the Messiah had to suffer and die before he could rise from the dead and enter into his glory. And then, at supper, the stranger did something that Jesus had often done so often: he broke bread, he blessed it, and he gave it to them,

and suddenly their eyes were opened. Now they knew who the stranger was. Now they knew it was Jesus, risen and alive, and now they went to Jerusalem.

We are like those disciples on the road to Emmaus. We often find ourselves walking in the wrong direction, walking away from Jerusalem, away from the Lord's suffering and crucifixion. We find ourselves going in the wrong direction because we are afraid of the cross, afraid that what happened to Jesus will happen to us. And because we are afraid, we cannot meet the risen Lord. But even when we are walking in the wrong direction, the risen Lord is still present to us. He is present to us, accompanying us on the journey, even when we are walking away from Jerusalem. And as he walks with him, he opens the scriptures so that we can understand God's plan. He blesses the bread for us, so that we can recognize him in the breaking of the bread.

Every time we come to Mass, we hear the word of God in the light of this Easter Candle that symbolizes the risen Christ. And, hearing God's Word of God in the light Christ, we understand that Christ is risen and alive. Every time we attend Mass, we celebrate the Eucharist, and we recognize the Lord in the breaking of the bread. As you participate at Mass today, recognize the presence of the risen Christ in our community of faith, in the Word we hear, and in the Eucharist we share. And recognizing him, we walk by faith.