



The Third Sunday of Easter (A)
April 26, 2020
‘The Road to Emmaus’
The Rev. Dr. Christian Brocato, Rector

+May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O God, our Strength and Redeemer. Amen.

Our brother, Howard Soehl, wrote the following this past week: “Resurrection living is about living in abounding grace, about facing the onrushing love of God, about believing beyond present circumstances, about the evidence of things unseen, about trusting in God’s grip of faithfulness on us and not on our grip of faith on God. So, can we rejoice in hope? Absolutely.”

I think today’s message needs to be about hope, hope in God, hope in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the hope to which we cling and need to cling for the future. These are not easy times and to think otherwise would be to live in world that really does not exist.

I find myself feeling pretty frumpy these days of working at home and at my laptop so much of the time. Oh yes, I do make trips to and from St. Mark’s several times a week and to the grocery store once or twice a week. But for the most part, I’m at home working seemingly endlessly on my laptop, too easy, too convenient, too...too...too... Thanks be to God for the grace of the Internet, Zoom, Facebook Live and today’s new use of Streamyard! Streamyard is the magic which is allowing more of us to lead prayer than before which is much appreciated.

What I’m also seemingly doing is eating and eating. Eating can become a past time, a distraction, a crutch for some of us while spending so much time working from home. Eating is an important activity, and when it is a shared activity, it can be a mini-celebration.

These days of sheltering at home, mini-celebrations especially for those of us living alone, are few if not at all. I recall an old tradition of setting a place at the table for Elijah but I wouldn’t have a clue as to what Elijah would enjoy having for dinner. An empty chair for Elijah is a tradition among some Jews for the prophet Elijah. Would Elijah enjoy participating in my endless quest for a frozen pizza which is delicious? I know that some of us are sharing meals via Zoom which is just really ‘cool’, to be sure.

Today's Gospel from Luke is a familiar and provocative story usually referred to as the disciples on the road to Emmaus. As cinematographic, if that's a word, is when Jesus appears to his followers on the road to Emmaus, it is really the meal at which Jesus becomes the host that grabs my attention.

A commentator on today's passage tells us that "In Luke, eating is a radical act because it breaks down cultural boundaries. In Luke, the resurrected Jesus shares bread once again with his followers. And in feeding them, Jesus opens their eyes, helping them see that Jesus was with them the whole time." (Eric Barreto, http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4442)

How are you finding Jesus with you these days? How are you finding time to be with Jesus? I pray you are here with Sue, Jan, Kenny and me this morning because you long to be with Jesus, have Jesus be with you and have Jesus in the very midst of our prayer together as a community of faith.

We continue as a community 'not' gathered around the Table at St. Mark's but virtually around a spiritual table which knits us together in a unique way. A tremendous blessing this past Wednesday was the great amount of food we took to the Downtown Food Pantry, gifts of non-perishable food and also a monetary gift. Just imagine these gifts will enable us to sit at the tables of many individuals and families in need around Grand Rapids!

For me and if there has ever been a time in which Jesus needs to be at my table of life, I think it is now. There are still people getting infected, still people in hospitals and still people dying here as well as around the world.

I pray that we invite Jesus to be with us and that the Holy Spirit of God will give us strength, patience and courage. We need to be part of the solution to the pandemic and not contribute to it.

Let us 'be' faithful disciples who through our love for God and one another will unite with God in Jesus this day. Let us pray for an end to the pandemic and to walk alongside Jesus on the road to Emmaus. May the grace of the Resurrection of Jesus be with us as we walk with him on the journey of life. Amen.