

3rd Sunday of Easter (A)

St. Athanasius and St. Francis Parishes
April 29, 30, 2017

(First Communion)

Today's Gospel about the two disciples 'on the road' is classic theology: it is how theology is done. It is a fine example of real theological reflection.

- take your life experience ponder it, pray about it, try to make sense out of it
- you may learn that much of human experience doesn't make any sense at all, or you may find somewhat quickly how your current experience fits in with the rest of your life, and particularly with your faith life.

Over time some see and recognize that troubling and nonsensical human experiences are actually not quite as troubling and nonsensical as first experienced. While some may never move in this direction, others are able to see an experience with new eyes. Often the difference between these two is whether or not people enter into the last but all important part of the theological reflection method ... conversation about God's place in the human experience. I have shared with you earlier a favorite line of mine ...

"Now that this has happened, what are you, God, and I going to do about it?"

It is not enough to think or even pray only about the experience.... it is necessary to ask the God question. Even if it begins "where **were** you God?" there is always the chance that by pondering, praying, and including God, we will come to see "where God **was and even is**" in the particular experience you are dealing with.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were dealing with the death of their friend. It was making very little sense to them. They had staked their lives on Jesus ... leaving their trades and occupations to follow Him ... and now all that seemed merely something of the past had it even been a 'waste of time'? When the stranger joined them, they talked about their experience with him, and as they pondered and recalled their Jewish religious tradition and customs, their eyes were opened somewhat. But it was only when they invited the person to remain longer, and during their supper meal together, that their eyes really opened. And they recognized that the stranger was actually Jesus. It was then that they said, "were not our hearts burning inside us as we walked along?"

Parents: today (11)(12) of you have an excellent opportunity to have a talk with your children. If you let this opportunity go, you will never get it back. This is the day of First Holy Communion for either your son or your daughter. This moment will not happen again. Today your child will receive the Body and Blood of Jesus for the first time. You have an opportunity to talk with them about how and why you yourself receive Holy Communion, you have an opportunity to talk with them about what and how you feel when you receive the precious Body and Blood of Jesus into your own body. What does it mean that Jesus is your food? ... your daily bread? Maybe you are not prepared to have this talk with your son/daughter today but you need to have it. This is not a

small event in their life. This is more important than their birthday, and more important than any success they have in sports, school reading, or whatever. Please don't let this experience pass without talking to them. And just maybe, as you have this talk, your heart will 'burn inside' you, and burn so intensely that you are changed, transformed. Just maybe your heart will 'burn inside' you so intensely that it will sear a permanent place for Jesus in your heart.

Children: What I have here is a 'walkie-talkie'. Actually I never had one when I was younger, but some of my friends had them. I think they were expensive, and not something my family would afford. Some of my friends received them from Santa at Christmas time. We used them when playing on the hills and bluffs near where I lived. Walkie-talkies were ways of talking to someone over air waves. We used them when playing "king of the hills"; they helped us capture kids from the other team or side. They were first used among soldiers during a World War. I borrowed this one for today, because I encourage you to have a very important talk with Jesus about your First Communion Day. Talk with Jesus about how receiving His Body and Blood in Communion will help you in your daily life. Having been strengthen with this Holy Food, how will you get along with your brother, your sister?

how will you obey your mother and dad when they ask you to help?
when will you come back to receive Jesus again?

Many of you talk with some of your friends almost every day, and you go over to each others' houses a lot as well. You talk with your best friend about lots of stuff Jesus needs to be part of that friend category!!!!

Parents: you don't really need to go on a walk with your children, but you can. You can have these talks when you are riding together in a car. Imagine driving to church together on a Sunday and talking a bit about what will happen there . What are you going to thank God for while you are at Mass? And then when you go home, you can talk about what songs you sang, and what you heard in the Scriptures. Parents whose children go to Liturgy of the Word for Children, talk to them about what the lesson was that day. We cannot just put in our time, and check off another experience. Imagine where we would be if the disciples had not talked about all that happened and was still happening in their lives. Nothing would have been thought through and handed down.

Some of you have these small Mass Journals. One of you was noticed on Easter Sunday to be walking in the Communion Line with one of these in your back pocket. You have no idea what a great witness this was to those who were behind you and noticed it.

Actually everyone in the parish should spend some time this week talking about today's First Holy Communion celebration. It may be what you need to make your heart 'burn inside' with the things of Jesus.