

Homily for April 26, 2020 on The Walk of Grief

Acts 2: 14-28; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1: 17-21; Luke 24: 13-35

Two disciples were taking a long walk of shock, in disappointment and grief from Jerusalem to their home, Emmaus. It was about seven miles from Jerusalem, about a 4-hour walk. It was a long walk and they were sad. They had heard Jesus' teachings, messages of love and forgiveness. Perhaps they might have seen many of His miracles and pondered over his teachings. They believed that Jesus is the promised messiah and accepted his discipleship with many others. Just like everyone else, they hoped for their deliverance from the Roman servitude and rule.

Unexpectedly everything fell into pieces. Jesus was arrested the Thursday before and was treated like a hard core criminal that night and got scourged, condemned to death and was crucified, next day before their Passover Sabbath. They were certain that this could not happen to the Messiah and hence got disappointed in grief. They had loved this Jesus, and now He is no more. That day, it was Sunday, there had been a story that Jesus was not in the tomb, but risen. So they wished that the resurrection hearsay would be a reality rather than a wish or a story.

Many of us have been on that road of grief. Our lives had been going well, had plans for vacations, or visit friends and were happy. We had our plans all set and everything seemed to be fitting into place. Then something unforeseen happened, something tragic or at least challenging. When tragedy strikes, just like the fast spreading epidemics of Covid 19 or war or insurrections or illness to us or our dear and near ones, it is quite normal for us to ask many questions. The main questions we ask is "Why? Why did this happen?" and "Where are you, God?"

When the disciples on the road asked the same question, the risen Lord answered them through the Scripture quotes. Jesus, the stranger who joined

them on the walk explained and taught them about the meaning of Messiah, Suffering Servant of Isaiah about His paschal mysteries with the reality of Resurrection. Yes, the Messiah was to resurrect from the dead.

Whenever we ask the *Why* question to our loving God, we need to listen to the Word of God tells us. Scripture tells us that there is infinitely more to life than the here and now. It tells us that we are made for eternity. It tells us that our loved ones have transitioned from this life to the next because physical life ends here, but the spiritual life is eternal life in heaven. We need to be exposed to Scriptures, the Word of God to deal with our lives. We need to read the Bible, listen to homilies refer to the passages of the Bible which relate to our lives. “Were not our hearts burning when He explained the scripture to us?,” the disciples said. Our hearts will also burn when we realize that everything, that happens in our lives can and will be used by God as part of His plan.

Then there is the *Where* question. Where are you God when this happened? God will answer you, “I am right there with you.” He is here with us now, rejoicing with us in our good times and crying with us in the stressful times. God is not remote, alien to or far away from us. He is so close to us that He wants us to take His Body and Blood and imbibe himself in us! Every time we receive Holy Communion, Jesus becomes part of us. Those disciples recognized the presence of God in the breaking of the bread. Acknowledging and believing the real presence of Jesus’ in the Eucharist, we need to receive Holy communion to cherish the very presence of God within us. We need to call out to Him for help in our dire needs and hold on to him.

We have all been there in distress and infirmities with those disciples on that road. We will probably be there again. But we will never walk alone. Jesus is there walking with us, calming us, soothing us with His Word and strengthening us with His Eucharist. Our lives are a journey with the Lord on the road to Emmaus. May God bless you!! +++ Amen. Fr. Thomas