

**Easter 3, Year "A" [RCL]: Acts 2:14A, 36-47; Psalm 116:10-17; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35**

**Title: But What Does It Mean?**

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**From the Gospel of Luke this morning we are treated to an action-packed story. In this story two disciples (but not of those who would become known as Apostles) are on the road to Emmaus. And what we see is something akin to a Sunday morning worship service. What I mean by this is what we have here is something like a sermon followed by Communion if you will.**

**The two men are walking and talking when from behind this man who also happens to be walking this same road catches up to them. And as kind of**

**happens sometimes they all wind up walking together. And Jesus says, “Hey, what were you fellows talking about?” And the disciples recount for the man all that had happened the previous week – about how Jesus had been arrested and crucified, and about the now empty tomb and how they don’t quite know what to make of it all. And Jesus gives them a little Sunday school lesson highlighting those parts of the Bible that speak of the coming Messiah and how at the end he would suffer. They are enjoying Jesus’ company and his ability to speak of the things of Holy Scripture.**

**But about that time they arrive at the Emmaus Bread and Breakfast where they intend to spend the night. And as Jesus is heading on down the road they shout out, “Hey there fella, it’s almost dark; why not**

**spend the night here with us? And Jesus thinks that not a bad idea and so he turns around and joins them.**

**And we can imagine that the two disciples were delighted. They had really become enamored with this guy and are looking forward to getting to know him better. We might say that they are opening themselves up to more Jesus.**

**Well, after finding their rooms and washing up they all meet again in the dining room. And like any good Inn, supper is served them.**

**At that point, a really important and quite surprising thing happens. Jesus assumes the role of Master. This is significant for in that culture it is the master of the house who breaks the bread**

**and who gives thanks before distributing it. And so it would have properly been the roll of the master of the house, the Innkeeper in this case, to manage the table. But no, Jesus takes over and the text tells us that in that moment Jesus took the bread and gave it to these disciples. And it was in THAT MOMENT that their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus. And then suddenly, somehow he is gone. And surely those gathered are puzzled. Was not this man; was not Jesus just here with us? And it seems that at some level they realize that though Jesus is not still physically with them at table, he is still present nonetheless. Present in the Bread and in the Wine. And present in that Jesus was now a part of their EXPERIENCE. Which is to say now a part of who they are. As much a part of themselves as the air they breathed, or the**

**follicles of hair on their heads. And for these two it all happened in a moment of time.**

**You may be familiar with the Rembrandt painting which depicts this very scene, this first Eucharist of the church that is to come. And in that painting is depicted the very moment of recognition that takes place at the breaking of the bread. In that painting are the two disciples, their friend whom they have met on the road, as well as the innkeeper who is serving dinner to his guests.**

**On Rembrant's canvass, at the moment of the breaking of the bread, at the moment of recognition, we see that one of the disciples has thrown back his hands**

**and stands drop-jawed as if he had seen a ghost.**

**The other disciple clasps his hands together as if in prayer -- an authentic, almost reflexive posture in the presence of the Holy.**

**Each expressed his response in a different way. But both responded. A dramatic moment for both as each finally recognized that this one with whom they had been traveling and with whom they now were breaking bread was Jesus, Holy One, Son of God. And neither would ever be the same.**

**Never again would they be comfortable living life as if they were in this thing alone.**

**Never again would it be business as usual.**

**And never again would either of them be without the comfort and hope that is to be found in the One who created and loves us all.**

**The Innkeeper? Well, he was just taken aback by it all. In the painting it would seem that all he saw was bread being broken -- the beginning of an ordinary meal. But for us he is one who is as if frozen in time. We know not what effect this experience might ultimately have had on his life.**

**But the disciples -- they were changed; they were different. And they were anxious to tell somebody about it. But who to tell? Of course the apostles. And**

**so that very night they run back to Jerusalem. They were too excited to wait until morning. “Give our rooms to someone else,” they probably said to the inn keeper. This news is just too great. Too wonderful to wait. For the text says that in that very hour they rushed back to Jerusalem to find their friends. And there (as they no doubt burst into the room both talking at once) told what had happened on the road, and how Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”**

**And that’s how it works.**

**For we know that in but a little while the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles just as Jesus had promised. And the coming of the Spirit was so glorious, so powerful, that many others were**

**attracted. And many were baptized -- for baptism is that physical expression, that moment in time when we submerge ourselves in the waters of the holy, and say, along with all our brethren, "I see that you are indeed the Christ, and that in you I become a new person and see all things anew." Baptism is the appropriate response when we recognize the Holy and seek to embrace it.**

**And this cycle has been repeated millions of times, again and again, until this very day. When one is baptized one vows to continue in the apostles' teachings and fellowship, in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers.**

**At baptism the newly baptized are changed, and we are changed each and every time we acknowledge the holy and**

**re-commit ourselves to embracing it and to rejecting that which is anti-thetical to it.**

**When we enter into this community of faith, we become part of a community that imagines life from a different perspective. How that new, changed life, plays out in our lives or in the community is up to us and the work of the Spirit. But I would say that at this particular moment in time it is important to see in this story that even in difficult times, even in confusing times, even in times of distress and maybe even fear, Jesus, God is with us. We are reminded in this story that there is comfort to be found in fellowship with Jesus and there is comfort to be found in fellowship with one another.**

**And by God's grace we are reminded that it is through an encounter with the**

**risen Lord, and through Baptism, and the breaking of the bread, and by continuing in the teachings of the apostles, and through prayer that we are continuously changed.**

**By God's grace, may the whole world be changed in response to the holy mystery that is God.**

**For it is from such an encounter, and our response to and participation in it, that emerges life abundant and the rumblings of the emerging Kingdom of God.**

**Amen**