

Third Sunday of Easter

April 10, 2005

Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

Preaching by: S. Beth Quire, O.P.

Today's Gospel passage of the "Journey to Emmaus" is one we have heard many times. Artists have depicted its scenes and musicians have ornamented its text with lyrical melody lines, but have we let it pierce our hearts? Has it touched the core of our being?

This journey begins with mystery. The stranger who appears is clueless as to what has been happening in Jerusalem. Innocently this one asks, "What sort of things (have been happening)?" These disciples take the time and describe the events around Jesus' death and the stories of the visions and experiences following it. They even share their hopes with this stranger. Then listening to what they have seen and experienced the stranger, Jesus, realizes they missed the whole point of his life and death. Like a patient friend he goes back to the beginning and interprets for them the deeper meanings of the Scripture with which they are so familiar. These two still don't recognize Jesus, but want him to stay on with them. He does and then in the table ritual, shared in love, their eyes are opened to who has been with them.

How often in our lives has Jesus found us focused and wrapped up in events and missing the point? Then patiently interpreting and uncovering meaning for us through prayer and sharing with other people.

Jesus is all around us everyday, and we are called to recognize this special presence among us. What is Jesus calling me to, today? How can I share the love of Jesus, this day? Our life is a journey, each day is another opportunity to both encounter and share the Jesus we so deeply love.

This has been a powerful week for Catholics and many people of the world. I have been amazed at the days and hours of secular media coverage around the events of Pope John Paul II's death and Mass of Christian Burial. It is inspiring the number of world leaders both of nations and religions, who chose to be present. The pope's holiness and way of living spoke to many. But if we and they truly respect what the pope stood for, we should attempt to live more clearly out of the values he exemplified. The news media made note of countries that were enemies both being present and in many cases speaking and even shaking hands. It is all good and well to recognize the holiness of this human being. But if we truly value what he stands for we are called to live out those values of peace, and forgiveness, and unity. This is difficult. The Christian call is difficult. The cost of discipleship is high, it led Jesus to the cross. But we must always remember, especially in this season of Easter, that it never stops there at the cross. As Good Friday is always followed by Easter Sunday and the two are intimately connected. So our call to take up our cross is also intimately connected to life in the resurrection! The call to live following the example of Jesus, as the Pope did, will be a challenge, but I believe it is a challenge we are called to, each new day we are alive. It is the challenge that will ultimately give us life! ALLELUIA!