

3rd Sunday Easter A (Luke 24:13-35)

As I was reading this gospel for today, and reflecting on the two disciples of Jesus walking along, I spontaneously began to hum a song by my favorite country and western singer, Willie Nelson "On the road again, just can't wait to get on the road again. The life I love is makin' music with my friends. And I can't wait to get on the road again." Makin' music with the two friends was probably an attempt to avoid the overwhelming disappointment at the loss of their friend Jesus after his cruel death on the cross. A lot of surprising events can happen on the road. I think that our life journey can be compared to our traveling on the road, and perhaps while on this road we walk, perhaps makin' music, we may, like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, encounter Jesus who walks with us, even though we may not recognize him. I do believe that Jesus can only touch us where we are, not where we think we should be.

Let's take a look at what is happening here. Two people, unbelieving, disappointed, hopeless, have hit the road, leaving their community, deep in confusion. They are joined by Jesus on the road and he actually walks with them in their loss of hope and in their bewilderment. He asks them to tell their story, the story of their unbelief in the astonishing news of Jesus' resurrection told them by the women, and he stays to have dinner with them. As they walk along, Jesus explains to them the scriptural promises of the Messiah and chides them for their weak faith. They have yet to recognize him and this will only happen in the breaking of the bread. Only with the breaking of the bread are their eyes opened.

Perhaps this is how God may deal with us when we have lost the way on our journey, on our road, when we are disheartened, disappointed, dejected, without hope, and struggling with our faith. With us, as with the two disciples, Jesus is more with us on our journey than we actually are aware of in our doubt and weak belief. Only in retrospect, after their eyes were opened in the breaking of the bread, did they notice that their hearts were burning within them as they walked with Jesus on the way. At times we may struggle with feelings of distance from Jesus, and it is then that he is most close to us. We can then recognize his walk with us, his closeness to us, his makin' music with us, only in retrospect. Jesus is closer to us than we are to ourselves and will never abandon us or walk away from us.

In faith we gather at the table of the Lord Jesus, where we break the bread, with one another, with a community of believers, and we recognize him in the Word proclaimed, the Word that moves us from doubt to faith, from hopelessness to hope, from dejection, despondency, confusion, and disappointment to a joy of heart. From our hearts that burn within us we too can proclaim with the two disciples, the "The Lord has been raised! It is true!" We too have come to know him in the breaking of the bread, and being fed and nourished with his very self. And all this happens on the road!

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