

HOMILY FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 2017

1. Plan for Israel, not expecting many surprises
 - a. Twice before, perhaps a few new things
 - b. God has his own ways as well as His own time
 - c. He decided it was time for me to experience some new things
 - d. By getting sick I discovered life in an Israeli hospital
 - e. Perhaps even more important I met some strangers and learned a lot
2. I had always had a bias against the Israelis
 - a. They always seemed so rude and appeared demeaning toward their Palestinian neighbors
 - i. I discovered what appears as rudeness is simply being very direct
 - ii. While we would tend to politely hint at what we want, they simply say what they think
 - iii. At same time, they are very open to negotiating over differences
 - b. Perhaps more importantly I saw a hospital being very compassionate to people who are poor and struggling
 - i. They were serving both Arab Israelis and Palestinian people
 - ii. I saw professional Israelis who are very compassionate persons
3. In today's Gospel, we meet two of Jesus disciples, one of whom identified as Cleopas
 - a. They are apparently dejected by the apparent failure of Jesus to save Israel
 - b. Instead he had been betrayed by their own chief priests and rulers
 - c. Suddenly this stranger comes along who does not seem to know anything about the news of the day
 - d. When they tell Him of their disappointment at the death of Jesus,
 - e. the stranger observes that the prophets had foretold that it was necessary for the Christ, the Messiah, to suffer and so enter into His glory
 - f. he then goes on to interpret the scriptures more thoroughly from Moses on and how it referred to Jesus
 - g. as Cleopas and his companion reach their destination, they invite the stranger to join them as it was nearly evening
 - h. about to begin their meal the stranger blesses the bread, breaks it and gives it to them
 - i. Suddenly they realize this is no stranger, they recognize him to be Jesus, He is truly alive
 - j. They are so overjoyed and energized that they run back to Jerusalem to announce their experiences to the rest of the disciples
4. Story in Luke's Gospel is asking us, do we really believe that Jesus is risen, what difference does that make

- a. Like Cleopas and his companion, we have a general awareness of the Resurrection
 - i. But it doesn't seem real
 - ii. We have things to do, places to go
 - iii. We have our comfortable routines and do not really want to change a whole lot
 - iv. If we always stay in our comfort zones, are we becoming spiritually dead in eyes of God
5. Every so often God is going to challenge us
 - a. He will offer us a new experience or stranger to awaken us
 - b. God may offer us a new vision of who He is and what we can be
 - c. The choice we must make is whether to embrace and accept what may come
6. Luke is suggesting that in the stranger we may meet Christ, the risen savior more directly
 - a. Jesus also invites us to welcome this experience in the Eucharist
 - b. Road to Emmaus is very much a vision of the Eucharist
 - c. We have the Liturgy of the Word in Jesus interpretation of the Scriptures
 - d. Finally, of course Jesus reveals Himself most fully in the breaking of the bread, the first name for the Eucharist
 - e. Jesus was sent by the Father to give us life
 - f. He offers Himself to us so that we might be filled with an enthusiastic faith.
 - g. Perhaps, like Cleopas and His companion, we will want to announce that Jesus is truly alive in our hearts.