

HOMILY FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT EMMAUS GOSPEL

1. Ever ask self: Why go to church, what is the point of Sunday Mass or St. Eve. Mass
 - a. Probably know many who have quit going, rather play or get work done
2. What possible reasons might be
 - a. Sense of duty or obligation
 - i. Maybe parents drummed into our heads: go to Church or else
 1. Even think about skipping Mass, hear their voice
 - ii. Perhaps we learned it was a mortal sin to miss Mass
 1. If missed Mass and did not get to confession, could go to hell
 - b. Perhaps more than a sense of obligation, but a spirit of gratitude
 - i. Realize how blessed we are: most of us have good jobs, more than adequate food, clothing shelter
 - ii. Really be impolite not to thank God on a regular basis for His kindness
 - iii. God is so good to us, that He gives us Scriptures as stories of His love for us
 - iv. Also communion as a gift of His Body and Blood
 - c. In addition to being place to give thanks to God, we experience a community
 - i. Get chance to see and visit some friends and neighbors
 - d. Although these are good reasons for attending Mass, today's gospel expresses something even more important to us
3. Story of two disciple Cleopas and a friend of his
 - a. On this third day after crucifixion they are leaving town
 - b. Arguing and debating, probably did we waste our time on Jesus completely, did we gain anything, should we have seen this coming
 - c. General sense of discouragement when along comes a stranger asking what they are arguing about
 - d. Explain that it is about Jesus, wonderworker, who they thought was the Messiah
 - i. We thought he was going to be the one to redeem Israel, bring her freedom
 - ii. Instead He was handed over to chief priests and rulers who had Him crucified
 - iii. Even hearing strange stories about women in their group finding an empty tomb
 - iv. Getting to be too much, we are going home
 - e. Stranger who is really Jesus challenges them: Why so slow to believe
 - f. Then He goes through the prophets showing that these events are not failures
 - i. a necessary part of God's plan from the beginning, that Jesus appear to have been defeated
 - g. Explanations so intrigue the disciples that they invite Him to stay and have a meal with them
 - i. He takes the bread, says the blessing and gives it to them
 - ii. Suddenly they realize this is no stranger, this is Jesus, He is alive

iii. So enthusiastic that they run back to Jerusalem, saying we have seen Jesus He is alive

4. We are a lot like Cleopas and his friend
 - a. We have our ideals and our hopes
 - b. We want a peaceful lives, where people get along with each other
 - c. We hope for a world without wars and violence
 - d. We dream of a world where we could work when we want to, to have a snense of purpose in life as well as time to find joy and satisfaction in the results of our work
 - e. We want families and friends whom we can cherish and feel loved by them
5. I think this sums up our hope and dreams, what we hope for in return for believing in God
 - a. It is what we pray for and hope for in any form of spirituality and religion
 - b. If not in this lifetime, we hope that it will be our gift in heaven
6. The so-called real world kind of smacks us in the face, saying grow up, it ain't gonna happen
 - a. There has never been this kind of peace in history
 - b. Skeptics argue that the world simply happened to come into existence
 - c. Just the luck of random chance, that we can think about these things and make stories to try to make sense of our hopes and disappointments
 - d. For many, if there is a God, He is irrelevant, not worried about being struck dwon by lightning bolts
 - e. Only thing that is real is what the majority of the people feel at any moment
 - i. Abortion is evil one day, a merciful act the next
 - ii. Death penalty may embarrass us one day, or we need it to feel safe the next
 - iii. Euthanasia is murder one day, mercy-killing the next
 - f. If there is not God to determine truth, then we are condemned to a false freedom
 - i. It is the freedom of our latest whim, or the whim of the crowds
7. The Eucharist, Sunday Mass, is a subversive act to a world that does not believe in a relevant God
 - a. We gather together to listen to ancient stories not because they are old but because God speaks to us through them
 - i. He tells us of His love for us, His hopes for us
 - ii. He promises to be with us, He urges us not to be afraid
 - b. Then through the prayer giving thanks to God, we call upon the Spirit of God to bring us back to the moments of the Last Supper, Jesus Death on the Cross and His Resurrection
 - c. As we receive communion we proclaim that Jesus is alive within us
 - d. We are the Body of Christ, He lives through us
 - e. We go to Mass because God is very real, that He is using us to change the world
 - f. God is working through us to work to bring about our dreams and hopes and in the end God will conquer and give us the fullness of joy.