

3rd Sun Easter A.... Emmaus

Introduction

We are a people of stories.

Our stories tell us who we are and what life is about.

What are our culture's stories?

What do we hear about on the radio and see on TV?

Regrettably, most of these stories clutter and clog our hearts with anger, repulsion, fear and sadness.

Of course, one exception would be the stories of our Pope Francis. Wherever he goes he visits the sick and the poor. In Egypt recently he called for mutual understanding, respect and ties of brotherhood between the faiths of Islam and Christianity and he denounces violence in the name of religion.

I Easter Stories

During Easter Season, which fills 50 days till Pentecost Sunday, our Easter stories are retold.

They fill us with joy and hope, peace and forgiveness – they lift us up and encourage us.

They assure us that we are not alone in this world, all on our own,

with no destiny except to be entertained consumers who have to have it our way all of the time.

Our Easter stories remind us that we come from God and go to God.

These stories remind us of God's love and care for us – even in the face of the many powers of death which surround us.

Our Easter stories assure us that our life is much more than just about us.

Our lives are not centered around us alone.

Our lives are much larger than just ourselves.

Our Easter stories remind us that we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we are Jesus' disciples.

Therefore we too will be victorious over the powers of death that surround us... if we remain faithful to our call.

II The Gospel

Let's now take a look at today's Easter Story of the Disciples on the Road to Emmaus.

Scene 1... Two disciples are walking away from Jerusalem. They seem to be downhearted and dejected. They had followed the Master. He was brutally executed. It's over. They're on their way home, talking between themselves about what had happened... and even debating.

Scene 2... A stranger joins them and asks what they're talking about. He's curious, and they immediately engage him in conversation...

Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?

The stranger asks them.

What sort of things?

The two disciples fill him in.

Jesus, a prophet, "mighty in deed and word", came among us. "We were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel." But our leaders had him sentenced to death and crucified.

There are even some stories that he is alive again...

but we went to the tomb, found it empty, and did not find Jesus. So we're going home now. It's obviously over.

Scene 3... The stranger challenges them...

How foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke.

How foolish.... How slow to believe.

The stranger then explains to them why their Master had to go through what he went through. He explained references in the Jewish Scriptures that looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

Their hearts began to burn with hope and love and devotion as the stranger talks with them on the road.

Scene 4... They arrive at Emmaus and they invite the stranger to come and dine with them after the long journey.

Listen to what happens next:

While he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized them. The stranger was Jesus, their beloved Master.

Scene 5... They rush back to Jerusalem to tell the others the wonderful news... Jesus is alive!

III Our Journey

What is keeping us from recognizing God in our lives?

Why are we so foolish and slow to believe?

Do we recognize the presence of Jesus on our daily journey of life? Do we spend time with Jesus every day?

Do we recognize God's love and care for us in our daily lives?

Are we grateful people... is gratitude our attitude?

How did God touch your life yesterday?

Yesterday was my day off. I went to see a movie and had late lunch with a friend. What a wonderful time to enjoy the blessings of God – the blessings that come thru friendship and breaking bread together.

So often we are blinded to God's blessings.

So many people too addicted to their smart phones...

Isn't it funny how we can blot out Good News,
how we can be blind to the goodness and love of God in our lives,

What are the fears and worries that clutter our hearts as we journey through life?

Not enough money?

Growing old and losing our youthful looks (maybe even losing our hair!)?

Getting sick and having to endure suffering and pain?

Not being as smart, as beautiful, or as handsome as we want to be?

Not driving around in the latest car or wearing the latest fashion, or owning the "must have" fad?

Our society's fads and fears are poured into our hearts every day thru TV and the news media.

We are told we can't possibly be happy without the latest product that is new and improved, satisfaction guaranteed, money back if you're not totally happy.

We are told we have to look this way, smell that way, wear these designer clothes... or we won't be... what?

Worthwhile, attractive, lovable, recognized?

For too many people this is what life is all about...
and our own lovableness and worthwhileness depended entirely on ourselves
and the *Kingdom of Stuf*,
that so blinds our hearts to God's presence and our goodness.

Conclusion...

In this Eucharist, as the consecrated bread is broken and given to us, and as
we drink from the chalice of his blood,
let's ask Jesus to come into our hearts this day...

Let us pray:

Jesus, so often we are blind to your presence on the daily journey of our
lives.

We are tempted to get lost in "stuff".

We are tempted to be overwhelmed by all of the "Bad News".

We lose sight of you, and of your victory over the Powers of Darkness – a
victory which you now share with us.

Jesus, come into our lives this day.

Let our hearts burn with love and devotion... towards you.

And help us to take some Good News into our daily lives,
into our homes and neighborhoods,

into our jobs and parishes,

to our family and friends...

the Good News that God is alive in our world...

and that you, Jesus, live in my heart and love me this day.

Amen.