

From the PA's Desk

**Gospel Today:**

The story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is very familiar to us, although some of us may not fully comprehend its layers of symbolism. It has always been one of my favorite New Testament stories. The Gospel of Luke was written about 40 years after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, so in reality, the story about the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, is really about the early Christian Church coming to understand who Jesus was and is, and it took them 40 years to figure this out.

The story begins by saying it all happened on "that very day." One may ask, what day? It's the day of the revelation and understanding about who Jesus is. The story mentions that they are moving away from Jerusalem and headed to a town called Emmaus. Emmaus was synonymous with the Roman way of life since it was the village where the Roman army camped during its journeys throughout Israel. By Luke stating that the disciples are moving from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Luke was stressing the idea that the early disciples of Jesus were starting to walk away from Jesus' revelation in Jerusalem, and going back to the Roman way of thinking and acting in the world.

We are told that Jesus walked with them but they didn't recognize him. Have you ever wondered why they couldn't recognize their own friend? How many times does God in Jesus walk with us in our life experiences, but we don't see him there? I could write a book filled with those life experiences. In addition, the resurrected Christ is different than the earthly Jesus. Have you been able to recognize Christ out in the world this week? The disciples ask Jesus if he is the only one who doesn't know what's been going on in Jerusalem lately, and that line always makes me smile. Jesus is the only one who really understands what has been happening. At the end of the story, Jesus again breaks bread with them and they see and understand, and are sent to tell others about their encounter.

What we see reflected in the Emmaus Story is the 40 year experience of the early Christians coming together faithfully to do what Jesus asked them to do the night before he died. For 40 years, with confusion in their hearts and minds, they gathered in his name, and in all the painful moments of their lives. At the beginning of every Eucharistic celebration, I like to look around the church and think about the people I see gathering there. Some are probably on the top of the world because they've just fallen in love or heard some great news. Others are torn apart in their sadness because of heartbreak, or the news of cancer or personal tragedy. Just like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we walk with a Jesus we often don't recognize, and our hearts are filled with pain and suffering and confusion. The disciples in the story enter into a conversation about life experience, and they reflect on the Sacred Scriptures. Does that sound like the Liturgy of the Word to you? Finally they break the bread, and recall the words of Jesus, and in doing all that, they come to see and experience him in ever newer ways.

The Emmaus Story is really a model for what the early Christians have been doing since Jesus commanded them to do it, and it's exactly the same model we follow today at each mass. I find it particularly appealing in the Emmaus story that Jesus does not wait for his followers to find him, but goes to meet them where they are on the road. He meets them exactly at the point where they are in their faith journey. The same is true for each of us. Jesus comes to meet us wherever we are.

I also find it appealing how his patience, understanding and love won them over, and dispelled their discouragement and despair. He gave them new hope for a better tomorrow. The Emmaus story is a model

for all who call themselves Catholic. As we continue in the Easter Season that will culminate at Pentecost, may we be ever mindful of Jesus who is always walking with us.

### **First Communions:**

Next Sunday, our 13 children and families who have been preparing all year for Confirmation and Eucharist, complete their Sacraments of Initiation as they join us at the table of the Lord in Holy Communion. Let us continue to pray for them and their families that Jesus will continue to make himself known to them, and especially through the breaking of the bread with us at Mass each week.

### **Alpha This Week: Who is the Holy Spirit?**

#### **Talk summary:**

- The Holy Spirit is not a kind of twentieth century phenomenon. He has been around literally since the creation of the world.
- For many believers, the Holy Spirit is really rather ignored — there is a big concentration on God the Father and on God the Son, but for many people, the Holy Spirit is an abstract supernatural reality.
- We're going to have a look at the history of the Holy Spirit through the Bible.
- The Holy Spirit does a variety of things including giving new life, a newfound sense of family and unity, and new power to follow Christ. The Holy Spirit not only transforms our character, but gives us the ability to be a blessing to others as well.

### **Maple Leaf by the Church:**

Thank you to Kathleen Powers for the wonderful and very artistic Maple Leaf in front of our church. She would like all our parishioners to sign it wherever you find room with the Sharpie Markers located next to it. Thanks again Kathleen, and great job!

### **Table at Maple Syrup Festival:**

If you've wondered why you could not find our St. Vincent de Paul evangelization table, it's because we didn't have enough people step forward to help host the table. There were only two people who came forward to help, and between the three of us, we'd have to sit there over three hours each, so we will try again next year. I'm not a fan of so-called Catholic guilt, but unless more people volunteer to help, certain aspects of ministry here will not get done. I do understand that with a small parish such as ours people are pulled in many directions, and many already do more than one form of ministry. Perhaps we can think of inviting others around us to step forward if they're not already doing some active public ministry? Also next year at the festival, we need to find some talented and creative persons to make a float for the Maple Syrup Parade.

**Hopefully you did see our new St. Vincent de Paul "Welcome" banner in front of the church on Wright Ave.**

### **C.S.A.**

Coming Soon! This year, the theme of the Diocesan appeal is **Advancing the Mission of Christ - Here I Am Lord**. Reflecting on this theme and the many charitable activities in which our parishes and Diocese are involved, we must remain faithful of our baptismal call and the very reason for our work, to Advance the Mission of Christ. Thank you for your consideration and stewardship.

### **Parish Pictorial Directory**

It has been six years since our last Parish Pictorial Directory, and it's time for a new one. We need a few people to step forward to help coordinate this wonderful project. We need people to gather photos, organize the layout, schedule family or individual pictures, and write or gather a brief history of the parish. Unlike previous directories, since we are all one parish now, the family photos and photos of our two churches can appear in one section. If you can help with this wonderful project and gift to the parish, please call the office.