

## REFLECTION by Fr. Anthony Davis

### “Jesus meets us on our Emmaus Road”

April 26, 2020

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Acts 2:14, 22-33; 1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35

Our Scripture lessons for today have one common, encouraging theme: No matter what happens in our lives, the risen Jesus is always with us. God is near to those who seek Him and who want to live in His presence, doing His will. The readings also remind us that our belief in Jesus' presence in the consecrated Bread and Wine should help us to understand better his presence in the Bible and in the believing and worshipping community.

Thus, the Emmaus incident in today's Gospel, is the story of a God who will not abandon us even when we are hurt and disappointed in our life circumstances. It is the story of how on Easter Sunday two disciples of Jesus, discouraged and devastated, set out on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and were overtaken by a stranger going along the same road. They began to speak to him about all that had occurred in the Holy City during the previous week i.e. the Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection episode of their master, Jesus Christ. However, God's Self-disclosure to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, through the Scriptural explanations and the breaking of the Bread, though unexpected, was a “game-changer” in their lives.

Indeed, such encounters with God which change people's lives, abound in the Holy Scriptures. In the Old Testament, for instance, in Gen.32: 22-31, running from his troubles, Jacob laid his head on a stone while he slept and saw a stairway to Heaven. He intensely wrestled all night with God through an Angel, so that hip-socket was wrenched. However, this “Epiphania”, had his name changed from “Jacob” to “Israel”. And as a result, he also named the place Peniel saying: “I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared”.

Then in the New Testament (Acts9:1-19), Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus to attack and destroy the “People of the New Way”, and Jesus got Saul's attention by knocking him to the ground and striking him blind. “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” “Who are you, Lord?”, Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting...” Through this radical experience, Saul had a complete “Metanoia”, which also earned him a new name, “Paul”.

We, like the disciples who were on the way to Emmaus, often fail to recognize Jesus when he is among us. It's about recognition (or the lack of it)!! Sometimes, we meet people who know him, who love him and revel in his grace. We read their books and listen to their podcasts. Yet the crazy irony is the missed opportunity for meeting Jesus living with us and within us.

Life message: “Jesus meets us on our Emmaus Road”. In other words, the risen Lord meets us on the road to our Emmaus, both in the ordinary experiences of our lives, and in the places of refuge, to which

we retreat when life seems much for us. The incident further illustrates that Jesus is with us even when we do not recognize him. He assures us: "I am with you always, till the end of time..." (Matt. 28:20).

Conclusion: We, too, have hopes and dreams about better health, healing, financial security and great family relationships. Yet these hopes and dreams are often shattered by such situations, like this debilitating pandemic called COVID-19. However, disappointments and problems can many times be transformed into successes and solutions merely with the change of attitude and perspective. Events which at first glance seem tragic or lead to problems, can be transformed into prosperity and new hope, and teach us new lessons.

Hence, whereas many see this Corona/COVID-19 virus as a great disaster, I would prefer to join the many others to see it as a "Great Corrector". This means, we are reminded that "the power of freewill is in our hands". And so, we can choose to, either cooperate and help each other, to share and support each other, or to be selfish and hoard to look after ourselves only. Indeed, it is difficulties that usually bring out our true colors!

Therefore, "Emmaus moments" come to us when we meet the risen Christ on our life's journey through rough times. "In the world you shall have many tribulations. But don't be afraid. I have overcome the world..." (Jn.16:33), says Jesus.