

APRIL 26, 2020
Sunday of the 3rd Week of Easter
Luke 24: 13-35

“STAY WITH US, LORD.”

I quit. Sometimes we easily quit especially when difficulties come along the way. Young people and kids are quitting all the time. They quit doing their home works because they are bored at home. They quit playing basketball, hockey or football after a few practices or guitar or piano after a few lessons. They quit their college after some years or even few semesters. Adults, too. They quit their marriage after a few years when they don't "like" the situations anymore. They claim they are not prepared or didn't know how tough marriage life would be. So, what did they, kids, young people and us, adults, think? Did we think anything that is worth anything would come easily?

This is the same with our relationship with God, our faith in Him. Instead of us following in our Lord's footsteps, we find ourselves turning back, defensive, backing-off, and walking away from Him. I'm done! I'm finished! That's it! This is not fun anymore!

This is what the two disciples felt about their Master, the Lord. They wanted to end their belief on Jesus. They wanted to walk away from Jerusalem and from Him. Three days were enough, and they wanted to quit and be back to their old life. This is the reality that the disciples faced during their own crisis in life. It is difficult for them to accept that their Lord and Master was dead that shattered their hopes and dreams. They were shocked, disappointed and in grief. They saw the suffering, death and cross, as a defeat not as a victory, and the empty tomb as incomprehensible. The two disciples were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, seven miles or 4-hour walk. It was a sad walk, it was a long walk of their lives.

According to St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD): “They were so disturbed when they saw him hanging on the cross that they forgot his teaching, did not look for his resurrection, and failed to keep his promises in mind (*Sermon 235.1*). Their eyes were obstructed, that they should not recognize him until the breaking of the bread. And thus, in accordance with the state of their minds, which was still ignorant of the truth - that the Christ would die and rise again, their eyes were similarly hindered. It was not that the truth himself was misleading them, but rather that they were themselves unable to perceive the truth (*From The Harmony of the Gospels, 3.25.72*).”¹

The two disciples recognized the Risen Lord in the breaking of the bread and realized that their hearts were burning when Jesus was talking and explaining to them what happened through Sacred Scriptures. Because of their sadness and grief, they wanted to “come out from Jerusalem” and disappointment led them to “abandon” Jesus Christ’ life and teaching. But along the way, they encountered the Risen Lord, opened their hearts and minds, and personally experience Him, and everything went well. They got up and return to Jerusalem and to Jesus again.

We experience crisis, hardships, problems and difficulties. We lost our job; we are experiencing financial difficulties. We are stuck at home and overwhelmed by this pandemic. Our normal life becomes abnormal. This is now the “new normal”. Before everything were going well. We were happy and content, our plans were fairly great and into place. Then, this pandemic happened. Everything changed and we are not ready.

“When tragedy strikes, it is quite normal for us to ask many questions. The main questions we ask are "Why? Why did this happen? and Where were you? Where were you God?" When the disciples on the road asked the Why question, they were taught that the answer to their question could be found in Scripture. The stranger that joined

¹ servantsoftheword.org

them on the walk told them about the Suffering Servant of Isaiah and then how the prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus suffering, death and resurrection. When we ask the Why question we also need to listen to what the Word of God is saying to us. Scripture tells us that there is infinitely more to life than the here and now. It tells us that we are made for eternity. It tells us that our loved ones have transitioned from this life to the next because physical life ends but the spiritual life remains. Scripture tells us that God can and does write straight with the crooked lines of our lives. We need to be exposed to the Word of God to deal with our lives. We need to read the Bible. We need to come to Church and hear how the passages of the Bible relate to our lives. "We're not our hearts burning when He explained the scripture to us?" the disciples said. Our hearts will also burn when we realize that everything that happens in our lives can and will be used by God as part of His plan. That is the best answer we can come upon for the Why question. Then there is the Where question. Where were you God when this happened? God answers, "I was right there with you." He is here with us now, rejoicing with us in the good times and crying with us in the stressful times. God is not remote, removed from us. The direct opposite. He is so close to us that He wants us to take His Body and Blood inside of us. We do this every time we receive communion (even spiritual communion). Then we come even closer to Him. Those disciples recognized the presence of God in the breaking of the bread. We call on our faith and recognize the presence of God in the Eucharist. We need to receive communion so we can cherish the very presence of God within us. We need to call out to Him for help. We need to ask Him to help us hold on, hold on to our being our best selves, to hold on to our faith. We have all been there with those disciples on that road. We will probably be there again. But we will never walk alone. Jesus is there walking with us, calming us, soothing us with His Word

and strengthening us with His Eucharist. Our lives are a journey with the Lord on the road to Emmaus.”²

My sisters and brothers, don't be afraid, don't be discouraged, have faith. Like the two disciples, let us get up and come back to our “own Jerusalem” – to Jesus Christ, who is the Master and Lord of our lives, who saved us, and free us from sickness, crisis, pandemic, death and sins. The Lord is Risen, He is with us! He will always be with us. Let us listen to His teaching and commandments who were and will always be effective, true, and valuable. Let us come back to Jesus, ask His mercy and forgiveness, bow down to Him, and everything will be great again.

Let this be our prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, like the two disciples, 'Stay with us because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.'³ I ask you to open the eyes of my heart so that I may recognize your presence and understand the truth of your saving word. Sustain, nurture and nourish me with your life-giving word and with the bread of life today and always. Amen."

² Frjoeshomilies.net

³ Luke 24: 29 NRSV Catholic Bible Press USA