

April 30, 2017 Third Sunday of Easter Luke 24:13-35

What a different sounding Peter, we hear from, in today's Acts of the Apostles. How is it, this tough fisherman, cursing at, and frightened by a little school girl, only days earlier, now has the nerve to yell boldly to the crowds. Is this the same guy who fell asleep after being asked to stay awake a short while? We really love this Peter character? He reminds me of that kid in the school yard growing up, who punched a little beyond their weight class, but only when their big brother was around.

My six brothers and I would spend hours getting ready for the dance on Saturday nights. It was easy to charm the admission cost out of our Mom's tenderness, but we were shy and timid and often needed, well a little more courage. On one occasion, we pooled all our funds together, and sent, the oldest to purchase a small bottle of additional courage. We were sure, it would help us overcome any awkwardness with the ladies. On our way to the dance, my brother carrying our precious courage in his back pocket, slipped and fell on the ice. There was a terrible crash. Slowly after getting to his feet, he reached behind to feel the wet on his clothing.

He looked heavenward with near tears in his eyes and said, Lads, I hope to God that's blood, and not our courage flowing on the street. I learnt later, we didn't really need that kind of courage, there were much better spirits available.

But what a deal it would be, if Christians today, in all our brokenness, had access to such life-giving drink? Well friends, we do! Spilled from the body of Our Lord, is blood, Christ poured out for all humanity. This is what Peter had consumed, until it had filled him and circulated in his very veins. His heart pumped, the blood of Jesus our saviour. He and the other Apostles had been taught and nourished by the words of Jesus, and now with the experience of death, resurrection, and through the blood of the unstained lamb were enlightened, and their faith strengthened with new courage.

Shortly we will leave these pews and come in unison after raising our common prayer and exchanging a gesture of peace. We will make our way to these tables of Word and Eucharist to receive blessing, body, and blood of Christ. Let us envision ourselves as though walking together, on a road to a tiny village.

Where, we will be offered the very drops of blood collected in chalices from at, the foot of the cross. Nobody gets ill sharing these chalices, only healthier, more courageous, and filled with the life of God. Peter became stronger not weaker from sharing the blood of Christ, and it is the more complete expression of our communion with one another. We are unified and set free by this precious blood.

But Our Lord is in a playful mood, as he joins two individuals sadly making their back to tiny Emmaus. We often discover great humour at these intersections, where the impossible meets the possible? Remember barren and elderly Sarah laughing at the angel, come to announce she will bearer a child, for the even more elderly, Abraham. Ya sure! She thinks. The name given to that miracle child is Isaac, which of course mean laughing. Or the Samaritan woman at the well. Ya I know, you don't have a husband, you have five of them!

Still it seems these travelers have come across the only person, who doesn't know, what has been going on in the city. A mysterious stranger and drifter pursuing them more intently than they could ever have imagined. The stranger brings and sure knows the scriptures inside and out. A gift brought, like fuel is to a bonfire. It's all quite impressive and so they invite the drifter in. Their hearts ignited from the kindling of scripture and presence, melts away any fear of the stranger. Disarmed and unthreatened, they are ready to take a chance on getting to know one another a little better. They have something in common. Jesus has knocked on their hearts and they have responded. I wonder though, who is really host and who is guest for this dinner date? People who come to my door are greeted cordially, but when you come and sit at my table, now you're my friend. And brothers and sisters, resurrection and Easter are about meeting and befriending God in new ways? And they are about allowing God to see us more naked.

At the supper table, the couple's wandering, companion takes some bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it. The four great Eucharistic actions! Receiving, Blessing, Breaking and Sharing repeated time and time again at Holy Mass!

It appears, hearts set ablaze, from having opened the scriptures and shared a meal together are finally recognized the glorified and risen Jesus. And this is all, Jesus needs to communicate. Do you recognize me? After so, they and we are never the same. Together dancing with this strange and mysterious God, and after sharing a laugh or two, it's becomes time to move on and to tell others.

Will we allow our walk with Jesus to recreate us, as it did the couple traveling to Emmaus? Can we allow the blood of Christ to chase away our fears and sadness, replacing these with instead courage, joy and full life? People with such marvelous news would have, but one thing to do. It would be to burst into song and dance, praising and participating with renewed vigor in the life of our God, who promises always to dwell among us.

Amen