

Easter - 3rd Sunday

- *“Walk it off.”*
 - Anyone who has been involved in sports...
 - as a participant or spectator...
 - has heard these very familiar words.
 - Whether you get a completely unexpected and sudden charley horse...
 - or take a shot from a speeding ball...
 - it's understood that...
 - you just can't sit there and wallow in pain.
 - You need to get up and move!
 - That's the only way things are going to get better.
 - Something very similar to this is happening in our Gospel as well.
- This week we are once again dealing...
 - not only with the Resurrection of the Lord...
 - but also with the Scandal of the Cross...
 - and its completely unexpected...and sudden impact on the disciples faith.
- Last week we saw this effect on Doubting Thomas.
 - The very fact that the Messiah suffered...
 - that's what kept him from believing in the resurrection of the Lord.
 - At least it did...until He met Him face to face.
- And we encounter the same thing on the road to Emmaus.
 - The Cross was too much for them as well.
 - It was a completely unexpected...and sudden shock of pain.
 - Their faith was injured...deeply...
 - and so they instinctively began to move.
 - That's why they're headed out of town.
 - Away from Jerusalem...
 - and away from the Lord.
 - In their mind...
 - time and distance were the only things that were going to help.
 - So they walk.
 - Hoping to leave it all behind.
 - And yet, notice how they stop dead in their tracks when they meet the Lord.
 - And all without even recognizing Him!
 - They don't know it quite yet...
 - but they are in for another shock!
- Last week...Thomas also failed to recognize Jesus at first glance.
 - He had to touch His wounds first.
 - And this week is very similar isn't it?
 - Before recognizing Jesus...
 - The Lord had to first slowly walk them through...
 - all of Sacred Scripture that referred to Him.
 - He was re-interpreting everything they already knew of the past.

- But now in a new light...in the light of the resurrection.
 - And so they do begin to understand at least why the Messiah had to suffer...
 - but they still remain blind to the One who stands before them...
 - at least until **the Lord** this time...
 - until He reaches out and touches them...
 - and He does so in the Eucharist...in the Bread of Life.
- I think we can all relate to their slowness of faith.
 - Because we've all had times...
 - when life was simply too much for us and made no sense...
 - times when we encountered the Cross and...
 - we were either tempted to...
 - or we literally did...
 - walk away from the Lord.
 - But hopefully we've also experienced the Lord touching our hearts...
 - and how everything just suddenly made sense.
 - Only in the light of Jesus' resurrected grace...
 - can we finally understand the reason for our pain.
- It is my hope...and I believe it's also the hope of the Lord Himself...
 - that we don't just walk away from the experience we are having...
 - trying to put it all behind us...and simply move on...
 - as soon as our stay at home orders...come to an end.
 - The Lord wants to accompany us in the time that remains...
 - to walk right alongside us...
 - and reveal to us...
 - why He has made us suffer...
 - and how He has been at work in our lives...
 - through this present Cross...
 - and all to bring about a much greater good.
 - Some of that suffering is communal and shared...
 - things that we can all relate to.
 - But there are probably also other things going on...
 - things that are deeply personal and unique to each of us...
 - things that we've also been struggling with...on top of everything else.
 - And with all of it...
 - the Lord wants to walk us through that experience again...
 - but interpreting it anew...
 - interpreting it in the light, power and grace of His Resurrection.
 - Jesus may appear out of nowhere...
 - and suddenly give us that inspiration.
 - But I also think it would be wise...
 - to dedicate some time to that task in prayer.
 - Ask Jesus to walk with you the next few days and weeks...
 - ask specifically for the grace of the resurrection to enlighten the way...

- ask Him to show you what He's really been up to...
 - during these extraordinary days of unexpected grace.
 - Some understanding will come...
 - but for other things....
 - they may remain wrapped in mystery for a bit more time.
 - Perhaps that understanding will come...
 - when you once again have the great grace...
 - of receiving Jesus in the Eucharist...
 - of being touched by His Presence there...and having your eyes suddenly opened...like the disciples in our Gospel.
 - Or perhaps that understanding will only come...
 - when you see the Lord face to face at the end of your earthly journey.
 - But I can guarantee that understanding will come.
 - I can't tell you the number of times...
 - when I've looked back over the course of my own life...
 - only to suddenly understand things in a whole new light...
 - to see with great and sudden clarity that truly all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord. (Rom 8:28)
- But as I mentioned at Easter...
 - I don't think this is the end of our present and communal Cross.
 - I think there is more that is still headed our way.
 - And I firmly believe that it is all for our good.
 - And whether you are at your breaking point already...
 - and you just can't take one more thing...
 - Or perhaps it may take another fall or two...
 - as you carry your Cross down the road...
 - At some point...
 - you may be tempted...very strongly...
 - to just give up and walk away from it all.
 - to try to "*walk it off...*" and keep right on going.
- St. John Vianney popped to mind as I was praying about this.
 - We all know that he is the patron saint of us diocesan priests...
 - that he heard confessions for much of his day...
 - and people would line up for days and weeks at a time - yes that long!
 - But did you know that he tried to walk away from his vocation?
 - And he didn't do it just once...he tried to do it several times!
 - When I looked up the story on the internet to refresh my memory...
 - a short article from one of the guys I went to seminary with...
 - was the first thing to come up on Google!
 - So instead of recounting it here...I'll leave you with a link:
 - <https://www.catholicity.com/commentary/landry/00840.html>
 - Take a moment to read it. It shows how the fruits of our labor...are truly worth the struggle...and eternally so.

- The Lord didn't let him get too far...each time he tried to walk away.
 - And He won't let us get too far either.
 - As long as we are open to the workings of His resurrected grace...
 - And continue to trust that all things...
 - truly do work together...
 - for the good of those who love the Lord.
- I want to leave you with the hopeful message that public Masses will be resuming soon!
 - Guidance is already beginning to come from the Archdiocese.
 - But of course we are awaiting final word from our mayor...
 - on when things will begin to open...and what limits will still be in place.
 - May 8th is the current date but that may change.
 - It suffices to say...and we hear it over and over again from many sources...
 - this won't be like flipping a switch and having everything back to normal.
 - So it will take great patience as we follow the next steps.
 - The numbers of those who can initially participate at Mass will be very small to start - most likely only 10 - but hopefully it will expand a bit more with time.
 - So you may not be able to come to Mass on Sundays
 - you may only be able to come to Mass once in the next month.
 - But fighting for that chance to receive the Lord will be worth it!
 - Sarah Rogers will be organizing the effort behind who can attend what Mass.
 - She is going to be getting a system in place that gives everyone an opportunity to come.
 - The Archdiocese may even have a centralized system for us to tap into.
 - We don't know anything more as of my writing but stay tuned for more.
 - Watch for more communication from Sarah, from the Archdiocese, as well as from our mayor. I will certainly keep you in the loop as well.
 - For now, this article is a few days old but still current as of my writing:
 - <https://denvercatholic.org/what-to-expect-when-public-mass-resumes/>
 - And the latest from the Archdiocese is always found here:
 - <https://archden.org/coronavirus/>
- Easter Mass was especially painful for me as I'm sure it was for you.
 - Instead of great resurrected joy I felt a deep down grief surrounding the Eucharist.
 - I felt the Lord's pain in His Sacred Heart for all of you who long to receive Him in Holy Communion but cannot.
 - I also felt the Lord's pain for all those who do not miss His Presence at all.
 - God is at work in our suffering...trying to bring about a greater good.
 - Would you consider offering some of yours for those who do not miss the Lord or perhaps have never known His love?
 - They could use the extra grace.
 - And rest assured that the Lord will satisfy the longings of your heart as well.
- God bless you all and I miss you!
 - Know that I can't wait to see you again at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!
 - My heart longs for it! And so does the Heart of Christ!