

OUR HEARTS BURN WITHIN US



Over Easter weekend the sun came out, tentatively at first as if it didn't belong here. Then a blazing display of light and glory, a sight we Oregonians have not seen for months yet clamored for. The burning yellow of the sun and robin-blue of the sky gave color and life and smiles and pure joy to every person, every bird, every blade of grass. The memorable day was topped only by evening and Easter Vigil, the first in our new church.

We live in a house with a daylight basement and a yard that slopes from the front to the back. The back of the house faces south with upstairs windows that stand 20 feet from the ground and seem taller than average. When the sun, high in the afternoon sky, shone brightly through the backside windows I was reminded that I hadn't cleaned those windows for many many months.

When we first see the sun after a prolonged absence we are reminded of the streaky windows that we have not washed; the tabletops that we have not dusted, the hidden corners that we have not swept. The sun, as welcome as it is, unfailingly shines on those areas that were unclean. Out of sight and out of mind.

In Sunday's reading, one of my favorites, two of Jesus' disciples were on the road to Emmaus. I imagine that their steps were laborious, disconsolate by the death of Jesus, the savior they had long hoped for. Though the risen Jesus met up with them in their journey, sadness had closed their hearts and Jesus was but a stranger to them. At evening, during the breaking of the bread, the first Eucharist, "their eyes were opened and they recognized [Jesus]." "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?"

When we first see the Son after a prolonged absence we are reminded of the streaky windows that we have not washed through the sacrament of Reconciliation, the tabletops that we have not dusted by welcoming the stranger, the hidden corners that we have not swept through examination of conscience. The Son, as welcome as He is, unfailingly shines on those areas that are unclean.

Despite this extra work, we clamor for the Son of Man because Jesus offers life and pure joy to every one of us. Our hearts burn within us.

(Readings for Third Sunday of Easter)



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