Dear Parishioners,

This weekend’s Gospel for the 3rd Sunday of Easter is probably one of my favorite post-Resurrection passages. It is affectionately known as the “Road to Emmaus.” We all know the story so well.

Two disciples are walking to a resort town 7 miles away from Jerusalem. They are getting away from all the events that transpired during Holy Week, that is, Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem, celebration of the Last Supper, the horrific events of Good Friday and finally the testimony of the eye witnesses at the empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning.

I find this particular Gospel passage very fitting. This Sunday, I was scheduled for the first of three First Holy Communion Masses. I would have celebrated with the candidates, their families, special friends and guests, and parish community at St. Edward a very special occasion.

As I wrote in a recent message to the candidates and their families, I reassured all the candidates that this very important event will occur once social distancing guidelines loosen up. Our united work of charity and mercy of social distancing is bearing fruit and making it possible to once again enjoy a public gathering worshipping God in prayer, fellowship and service.

And I truly believe that these sacrifices and selfless acts of grandparents refraining from physically embracing their grandkids, friends foregoing out and enjoying a meal and drink, and coworkers distancing their shoulder to shoulder work space when soon allow us to see each other again, but differently much like the disciples on the Road to Emmaus experienced.

The death of Jesus on the cross was a great personal loss to them. In their sorrow and sadness, they felt a real separation. But notice what happens. Along the road to Emmaus, a connection is made when they least expect it. Through an openness to discuss Sacred Scripture concluding in the breaking of the bread, they were able to gain a greater appreciation of what they had lost.

So, it is with us. I realize that during this time of ONLY being able to participate in a Spiritual Communion, there is a great hunger and longing for the Eucharist. We are all realizing how much the Eucharist means to us for our physical and spiritual lives.

However, as I have heard many of you express who faithfully read Bishop Robert Barron’s “Lenten Gospel Reflections” and answered the daily reflection questions in your journal, you discovered that a daily engagement with God’s Word enriched your lives.

Just because the season of Lent is over, this doesn’t mean that we cease the good spiritual practice of engaging in Sacred Scripture. Please consider picking up a copy of the Word Among Us Daily readings for the Season of Easter (there are copies at the Visitation School Office open Monday thru Friday 9am to 3pm).

This continual good spiritual routine of reading, reflecting, and sharing the Sacred Scripture will allow us to have a “Road to Emmaus” encounter with Christ. And when we are able to ONCE AGAIN celebrate of the Breaking of the Bread, the physical encounter with Jesus in the reception
of the Eucharist, our experience of Holy Communion will be anew, different and profound. My hope is that it will be with the same zeal and reverence we had when we received our own First Holy Communion years or even decades ago.

Have a Blessed Easter Week!

Fr. Michael
26 April 2020