

Dear Parishioners,

It is not uncommon for us to reflect upon our lives in the image of a journey. Undoubtedly we have visited or vacationed in some part of our own country or a foreign land and have been transformed by the experience. We bring back stories of the “adventure” and eagerly share photos of the people, places and events of the time of our being away. Many of these situations remain in our minds and in our hearts for years to appreciate. Occasionally the journey memories are bittersweet because of people no longer with us whom we shared the moments. Other journey in life memories can unfortunately be painful by recalling hurts, slights, abuses and a determined stance to remain dug in, bewildered, angry or unforgiving. Life itself is a journey of the unexpected. As Christian people, though, we need not question if God is absent from us. In Christ Jesus’ own words we are reassured that “I (he) will be with you until the end of the age.”

The Gospel reading from Saint Luke this Sunday captures the image of the journey in a familiar and poignant way. It is the journey to Emmaus, a post-Resurrection account. Unobtrusively we are ushered into the journey of two disciples going home bewildered and unfulfilled. Their story recalls the human painful suffering and death of Jesus and reopens the wounds of these disciples whose hopes were smashed and dreams were shattered. In their wanting and longing for what seemed new and exciting a mysterious traveler joins them and instructs them with a message that refocuses and reassures them who were presently “foolish” and “slow of heart.” Their bringing the mysterious traveler into their home in a true spirit of welcome and hospitality for his subsequent breaking of the bread in their presence at the common table opened their eyes, enlivened their hearts and emboldened them to tell their story of the living Christ on the journey to Emmaus later to the other giddy and joy-filled disciples. In fellowship they received the living Christ as a covenant of love renewed. We call this the Eucharist.

During this time of absence from the altar of Christ at the holy sacrifice of the Mass I am sure we echo the longing and emptiness of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. We hunger to meditate on the living Word of God and to receive the true Sacrament of Christ but are prevented from doing so right now. Still let us remain confident that until this crisis passes and assuredly throughout all our days and *journeys* Christ Jesus walks with us, shoulders our fears and burdens and invites us to grow in the same living faith of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. God bless you and be assured of my daily prayers.