

## Thoughts in the Time of COVID-19—#16, April 24, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters,

In the Newman Centre at the University of Toronto, there hangs a beautiful icon of the Journey to Emmaus that we will hear proclaimed in the gospel for this Third Sunday of Easter (Luke 24.13–35).

A striking feature of this icon is the interpretation of the journeying pair as a couple, husband and wife. This says to us that at the core of marriage, the state of life to which God calls most people, spiritual sharing holds an important place. And that in sharing every aspect of a person's life, which marriage demands, Christ is truly present, even if in a veiled manner.

From Luke's account, what we know about the identity of the travellers is that one of the disciples was named Cleopas. We might ask why Luke does not tell us the name of Cleopas' fellow disciple. Besides the interpretation that the icon proposes—that the second disciple was Cleopas' wife—I have found it attractive to think that Luke deliberately left this disciple unnamed so that each reader or hearer might see himself or herself in the story.

That way, you and I can each imagine ourselves taking that journey with the hidden Jesus and having an experience of our hearts being set on fire when Christ explains how God's will is present even in the sorrows, disappointments, and setbacks we experience, such as those we are living through in these days of confinement due to COVID-19.

For many of our parishioners, this has meant being deprived for over a month now of the reception of Holy Communion and the chance to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in confession.

For many of our young people, this has meant the delay of their First Holy Communion or their being confirmed—sacraments that we often celebrate during this Easter season.

As well as couples having to cancel or delay plans for their marriage, we have deacons and priests whose ordinations have been pushed back several months on the calendar.

To all of them and all of us, the Lord can still be present not *despite*, but in a special way *in*, these trying circumstances that He wishes to turn into experiences of consolation, joy, and peace—the gifts of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ.

God bless you.

✠ Terrence