

**Fr Dispin John Homily 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter Mass 25/26 April 2020**

**St John the Evangelist Catholic Parish Mitcham Victoria Australia**

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These days, with the little person staying in the house too, I listen to a few nursery rhymes. And one of them I happened to listen to was, "Are We There Yet?" You know that nursery rhyme, don't you? It's about children travelling in a car with their parents and getting a bit impatient to see if they had reached their destination, while the parents in the car are trying to say, "Just enjoy the vision around we will get there."

It seems like our story these days. Are we there yet? When are we going to get out of this whole thing? And when are we going to come back to this place, to our places of social gathering, and to our normal everyday life? Are we there yet?

Last Wednesday I visited one of our schools. The schools are back, not fully operational, but our teachers are back working hard. And there on Wednesday, I saw some of our children drawing a rainbow. They were drawing something and I then asked them, "What are you doing?" And they told me they were drawing a rainbow on the ground. I could find only little five colors and I thought rainbows had seven colors. Later the teacher told me they had only five colors of chalk and therefore it is a five-colored rainbow. It doesn't really matter. Why rainbow?

Well, in these days of dark clouds of isolation and fear, we are not going to be completely covered and overwhelmed. The entire skies of our lives cannot be covered by these dark clouds that we still have the silver lighting and the real ray of hope. And their drawing of the rainbows stands as a powerful symbol of that new hope.

So today as we celebrate the third Sunday of Easter, we are invited to deepen that sense of hope and our faith in the risen Lord. We are invited to enter into a journey with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. A journey that would eventually lead us to recognizing Jesus. The story of the road to Emmaus is a fascinating one as it portrays the journey of the disciples and perhaps our own journey too. A journey of disciples who were covered in fear and confusion, a journey of disciples who did not understand the meaning of rising from the dead. It's a journey of the disciples who were uncertain about the future. Sounds like us, doesn't it? Our own journey.

After the death of Jesus, the disciples were scattered and shattered too. Like the hopes of the disciples who speak of Jesus as a prophet they had placed all their hopes on, completely devastated they journey on. Now, as they go through accepting the reality of Jesus passing, they slowly return to their everyday life. It doesn't mean they completely forgot the Lord. It only means that we need to get on with life. When we encounter problems and losses, there is a time when we are forced to encounter the everyday life. That does not mean we forget those, but it only means that that life must go on.

And Jesus' disciples on the journey from Jerusalem to their destination Emmaus, are in the same place. They walk, maybe their heads downcast, uncertain about the future, and that is where a stranger enters the journey. A stranger enters the journey completely uninvited, and he walks along with them. He talks to them. Doesn't reveal to them who he is, but he continues to journey with the disciples. What I like about this passage is that Jesus then invites himself kind of into their homes and he chooses or says yes to staying with them.

Both from last weekend's gospel when we see the disciples who were locked behind the closed doors and in today's gospel, we recognize that Jesus is the one who takes the initiative to enter into the fears

of the disciples in their confusion and giving them peace and the gift of himself at the breaking of the bread.

It's a story quite similar to ours. We can journey on, kind of trying to get over, but it can be a very lonely journey without Jesus. The moment Jesus enters, things change. And we know that as disciples of Jesus, we depend on Jesus. It's not a sign of weakness, but a sign of great strength that we have the courage to place our complete trust in the Lord. We depend on Jesus, but the good news is Jesus does not wait for us to go to him.

In these two stories from last weekend and this weekend, we see that Jesus actually goes to them. Jesus recognizes the need for him to be present in their lives. Jesus knows his disciples are hurting, so he goes to them rather than waiting for them to come to him.

Remember, this story is our story. We can be behind closed doors, we can be walking with confusion and darkness, but the encounter with Jesus must happen. And once that personal encounter with Jesus is complete, then we have a companion who is prepared to walk with us. A companion who will stay with us. A companion who will draw us out of our darkness. A companion who will draw a beautiful rainbow in our dark, cloudy days. A companion who is really alive and present every day presenting to us new hopes and new life. The Lord is risen. Alleluia.