

Fr. Daniel's Homily on the Gospel Reading for Wednesday within the Octave of
Easter, April 3, 2013

The story of Emmaus is a very early example of the format of the Mass. You can see in this reading of the journey to Emmaus when Jesus joins the two disciples on the journey of life, that all of a sudden the Scriptures are broken open and He begins to explain the Scriptures to them, while they are walking on the way. Once they arrive at the place He goes in and He breaks bread and blesses the bread. It is very much like we do in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is their encounter with Christ just days after the Crucifixion and even before Pentecost and the Ascension and the birth of the Church.

That becomes the prototype of listening to God's Word and then doing the Eucharistic sacrifice as part of that celebration.

The one line that always strikes me though is where it says "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way." (Luke 24:32) I think that is a sign often of a true encounter with God, that when Christ speaks to our soul we cannot get enough of it. We want to understand it even more and it is like a sense of burning in our hearts. When you are talking with someone and they express that kind of burning and their love for God's Word, for the story of Christ, the crucifixion and the forgiveness of sins and the way they speak about it, that sense of burning, you know that God has captured their heart. That is really the hope that we have for people of faith that we love to see. That is when you know that conversion has truly happened, as opposed to a stony, cold, frozen heart. Those images are clear for us. They are deep within our being. We do not have to explain that symbolism. We know what it means.

That sense of a burning heart for the Lord, may it be our prayer, especially this Easter season in our parish, that more of us have that sense of when we hear God speaking, when Christ speaks to us in the Scriptures, that it does something to us, that it speaks to us at a level that no other words speak to us. If we can get to that, then we know that is a real conversation with our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit.