

Easter 3 4/26/20
Luke 24:13-35 A

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (St. Luke 24:25).

In the year 1564, King Charles the 9th decreed that France would adopt the Gregorian calendar already in use elsewhere in Europe. Charles' edict meant that January 1st would become New Year's Day. Before that, New Year's Day had been celebrated in France on April 1st. Some were foolish and slow to believe and didn't adjust to the change and kept right on celebrating April 1st. They came to be known as “April Fools” and pranks soon became part of April Fools' day.

There is something much worse than not understanding that a new year could begin January 1st -- not understanding all the promises of God in Holy Scripture. This is the problem of the disciples on the road to Emmaus in our Gospel lesson for this Sunday. They did not understand the main message of the Scriptures.

On Easter Day, two of the disciples decide to walk the seven miles to Emmaus. As they made their way, they talked. But, they didn't talk about ... baseball, weather, will life ever return to normal. No, they talked about Jesus, about all the things that had happened to Him.

As they walked and talked about Jesus, He comes along, starts walking with them and the Evangelist says their eyes were kept from recognizing that it was Jesus (cf. v. 16). So, the Savior asks, “What are you guys talking about?” And Cleopas answers Him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days (v. 18). And Jesus says, “What things (v. 19)?” And

they answered, About Jesus of Nazareth,

a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see (vv. 19-24).

Do you see what's happening here? They talk to Jesus about Jesus, without knowing its Jesus. And as they do it, they look "sad," because they are really, really sad. They had hoped "that He was the one to redeem Israel (v. 21)." And that made them foolish, because they did not understand why Jesus had to suffer, die and be raised the 3rd day.

I say that because for them, "redeem Israel" meant an earthly kingdom. That means Jesus of Nazareth gets rid of the Romans, sets up David's throne, and makes Israel into a superpower, which meant for them a chicken in every pot and two cars in every garage and free internet. That's what "redeem" means to them.

And to that, Jesus can only reply, "Uff da!" No, He doesn't really say that, but that's what He means, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory (vv. 25-26)?"

This whole thing is just so sad. But, we can't beat up on these two disciples too much because what is true of them is true of all of us. All of us are foolish and slow of heart to believe. The reason why is this: In the Bible, the human heart is more than just an organ that pumps blood through the body. In the Scriptures, the human heart is the center of the

person; it's the center of emotions and the will; all that you fear and feel, all the ways you act and react is a function of the heart.

In light of that, the Bible teaches you that you, by nature, have a bad heart, which is slow to believe God's Word, and you do not fear, love, and trust in God above all things. The book of Ecclesiastes says of you, "the heart of the children of man is fully set to do evil (8:11)." Your heart is filled with evil because you were born sinful and unclean. That's the reason the fool says in his heart, "There is no God (Ps 14:1)."

You are foolish and slow of heart to believe, but the Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus did, in fact, redeem Israel. Redeem means to "buy back," and Jesus did buy you back from sin, death, and the devil "not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death (Meaning of 2nd Article).

Jesus did suffer; He suffered to you redeem you. He suffered when He sweat drops of blood and His disciples abandoned Him. He suffered when the Roman soldiers mocked Him crowned Him with thorns, and took Him out to be crucified at the place of the Skull. He suffered when He died upon that cross. He suffered all that for you, to redeem you, "so that [you could] be His own and live under Him in His kingdom (Meaning of 2nd Article).

And He makes you His own in Baptism. Look at the words of Peter in our first reading. At the font, God delivers to you the forgiveness of sins Jesus won by His innocent suffering; and where there is forgiveness, there is life and salvation. And in that washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit, you received the gift of God the Holy Spirit who works faith in you so that you are no longer foolish and slows of heart, but rather you walk by

faith, trusting, rejoicing, and finding comfort in Jesus. Your once slow heart, now burns within you to hear the voice of your Shepherd Jesus.

And that is Good News for you as you walk by faith. You don't have to walk on the road to Emmaus to know sadness. You've walked out of the doctor's office with your spouse or child and their illness was so far advanced that all the doctor could say was, "There's nothing more we can do." You've made that walk from your loved one's graveside, and you're not sure how life is going to do or what you're going to do. You once walked down the aisle to hear your spouse say, "I do," but now they don't, so you've taken that walk out of the attorney's office after signing the divorce papers.

The Good News for you, Dear Child of God, is that when you've made that walk, you're not alone. There is Jesus Christ, walking right with you. And then, Jesus will do what He always does -- He will point you to "Moses and the Prophets." "Moses and the Prophets" was the Jewish way of referring to the Old Testament. In other words, Jesus will point you to the Bible, where it tells you how much He loves you; where it tells you all about His suffering, death, and resurrection, for you and for your salvation.

He will point you to passages like Matthew 28, where He promises and assures you, "I am with you always, to the end of the age (v. 20)."

He will point you the treasured 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me (vv. 1, 4)."

When you are struggling and the cross is heavy, He will point you to words like these from Philipians, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all

understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Ph 4:6-7).”

When you walk that thoroughly depressing, sad walk; when your hopes are gone and your dreams are broken to pieces; when things are not going your way; when the darkness of the valley of the shadow of death overwhelms you; Jesus is there with you. He is there to listen to you. He is there in His Word and His life-giving Body and Blood to forgive you and give you strength. He is with you always, even to the end of the age. Remember Dear Child of God, YOU NEVER WALK ALONE.