

Homily  
3EasterB  
April 19, 2015  
St. Bernard Church

Jesus – after Resurrection

Not recognizing Jesus

Walk to Emmaus

Today's Gospel

“Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

Jesus is going away, this time for good. His followers won't be able to see his hands and his feet anymore.

Now the world will see him in a new way, in the breaking of the bread, in the Eucharist.

Here's the question. Here's the challenge.

How do we recognize, how do we see Jesus in the Eucharist?

First of all, there is a tradition for this in the Old Testament.

While the Israelites were wandering in the desert on their flight from Egypt, they complained of how hungry they were.

God responded by sending them bread from heaven, the manna that provided the nourishment that the Israelites needed.

God instructed the Jews to keep some of the manna in the Ark of the Covenant, along with the commandments given to Moses.

He further instructed the Jews that, three times a year, on major Jewish feasts, this bread was to be shown publicly to the Jewish people in Jerusalem along with the proclamation “Behold God's love for you!”

The Jewish people believed that when the Messiah came, the bread from heaven would also come again.

When we look at the New Testament, there's a very important question that the Jewish people asked Jesus in Chapter 6 of John's gospel, one of the most important questions that Jesus was ever asked:

"What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you?"

How did Jesus answer this question?

Here's what he said:

"It was not Moses who gave the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

His Jewish audience responded by saying,

"Sir, give us this bread **always**."

Not give us this bread now. Give us this bread always.

What does Jesus then say?

"I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger..."

"Whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world."

In the Eucharist, the suffering and death of Jesus are re-presented. What Jesus did once for all time becomes present and available to us at each Mass.

Here is how the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains it:

**Because it is the memorial of Christ's Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice.** The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: "This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the New Covenant in my blood." In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (CCC 1365)

So, again, how do we see, how do we recognize Jesus in the Eucharist?

It takes two things:

1) faith – We have to see with the eyes of faith, believing that what Jesus told us about his presence in the Eucharist is true, that he really does offer us his entire being.

2) imagination – When we look at the altar during and after the Consecration, it helps to think of what it must have been like for Jesus when he was tortured and crucified. As he carried his cross up Calvary, can we hear people mocking him, spitting at him? Can we imagine the noise, the heat, the dust, the sweat and the blood? Can we hear the sound of the nails? Then we have to realize that he went through all of that for each one of us.

Mary

The most powerful force in human history is the suffering and death of Jesus. When, in the Eucharist, we unite our lives to the life of Jesus, we have access to that power. The only thing that obstructs our experience of that power is our own lack of faith, our own lack of belief in the power that Jesus offers us.

In a few minutes, Jesus is going to be present to us again, in the flesh. How can we say no to him? How can we be indifferent? How can we ever say that Mass is boring?

Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed.