

## The Third Sunday of Easter

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By

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### FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP HOMILY

We learn in school that we have five senses. Sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste. It seems that the sense of sight over rides the other senses when we are put in a first time or new experience. We seem to make a judgment of what we see. If you closed your eyes right now and held the hand of the person next to you, would you really know who's hand it was if you hadn't all ready seen them? I do know one persons hand that I would recognize...Tom Miller's. His hands are always toasty warm. Unfortunately mine always seem to be cold! I was thinking I could run an experiment on my sheep. Take one out of the flock, strap a wolf skin on it and try to put it back in the flock. If sheep could say EEEEEK, they would and then run. However, since they are flocking animals, the one with the wolf skin would run after them! I'd better clarify right now that I do not have a wolf skin! I don't want the DNR at my doorstep, asking me to turn over a wolf skin. What we do as humans and what I'm trying to describe with my sheep is that we have a problem with perception....the ability to see below the surface. In the sheep's situation they need to see below the wolf skin. They would understand there was a member of the flock with them, not a wolf. For us, we need to see below the physical appearance of a person. In John 20:15 Mary thought Jesus was a gardener. In our Gospel today the two disciples, Cleopas and his companion, do not recognize Jesus from a physical standpoint, but then did recognize him when Jesus blessed the bread, broke and offered it to them. So too Jesus comes to us in many different ways and uses different people and events to teach us and also to reach us. We get distracted with pictures or paintings, and media discussions on whether he was a man or a woman, black or white skinned.... these are all physical appearances and we will never know. I thought it was interesting that Jesus did not give up or get annoyed with the disciples when they didn't recognize him on the road. Weren't they sad, gloomy, and fearful? As they walked along the road Jesus spoke to them about the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Book of the Prophets. As it drew dark they (not Jesus) asked if he would stay with them for the night. Jesus went from being a stranger to these two fellows to their host. When they got to the room he sat down, he took some bread, blessed it and broke it. Then he gave some to the disciples. At once they knew who he was! He came before them not to just show an appearance, but to encourage and instruct them on scripture for their days to come. The disciples were given strength and positive attitudes from this time spent with Jesus. We too can know and understand about Jesus, even with his physical absence, through scriptures and breaking of bread. It will give us strength to face the difficulties of life.

In Acts 2 Peter and the eleven apostles were speaking to a large crowd about God sending Jesus, the miracles Jesus worked and how Jesus was to die. God gave Jesus the Holy Spirit and now Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to us. Peter and the apostles gave lessons on the scriptures. About 3000 people were baptized that day. The last sentence of verse 42 says, "They broke bread and prayed together." The beginnings of our Christian life. Today, and every Sunday we gather here at St. James for spiritual fellowship. Look at your bulletin: We begin our service with The Word of the Lord. We hear scripture and we pray. After the peace we move on to The Great Thanksgiving. We are a family here at St. James joined in our lives, we pray together, interpret the scriptures and break bread.

Peter had more advice for the crowd as he spoke, "Turn back to God, be baptized so your sins will be forgiven, and you will be given the Holy Spirit." Our faith gives us strength to handle the pressures of life. We all know life is both joy and sorrow. We can all handle the YAHOO and YIPPEE times of life, but what about the ANGUISH and AGONY of sickness, death or loss. If we had a "faith-o-gram" or "spirit-o-gram" (similar to a cardiogram) it should read straight across the board, not peaks and valleys.

Well, our Gospel ends with Cleopas and his companion going back to the eleven apostles to tell their story. We don't ever hear about these two people again. They were ordinary people like you and me. Our road is most likely similar to theirs. Keep in mind as you meet someone new to be perceptive. Don't make those snappy or hasty decisions based on a physical appearance. Likewise think about what do people perceive in you. Hopefully a person much like Jesus.... patient, loving, helpful and full of faith. In Eucharistic prayer C part of what the Presider says is, "Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Deliver us from the presumption of coming to this table for solace only, and not for strength; for pardon only, and not for renewal. Let the grace of this Holy Communion make us one body, one spirit in Christ, that we may worthily serve the world in his name." The congregation's response is: "RISEN LORD, BE KNOWN TO US IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD."