

Dear Brothers and Sisters



‘And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us when he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?’ (Lk. 24: 30-32)

The disciples did not recognize the Risen Christ on the road to Emmaus. They walked with him for seven whole miles, from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but failed to realize who he was. How is that possible?

They did, however, recognize him at the breaking of the bread. The breaking of the bread is a clearer manifestation of his presence to them than they’re actually conversing with him in person.

The Risen Christ also accompanies us on the road of our daily life. It’s easy to fail to recognize him.

One place we can recognize him is in the breaking of the bread -the Celebration of the Eucharist. This past year we have experienced a Eucharistic fast, an absence from the Sacrament. Churches were closed, we were dispensed from attending Mass!

This experience has taught us that we cannot live without the Eucharist. I witnessed people weeping when they returned to Church, and received the Body of Christ for the first time in months, or even a year.

The Church is open, we can participate in the Celebration of the Eucharist, we can be fed with the Body of Christ. Our experience is that of the disciples - our hearts burn within us, as Christ stands in our midst. The words he spoke to the disciples are also addressed to us: “Why are you troubled?”

“He took the bread, broke it, gave it to his disciples saying, “Take this all of you and eat it, this is my body which will be given up for you.”

Jesus ‘took the bread.’ The bread was not ‘given ’to him, or ‘shared ’with him! He ‘took ’it. Just as, at the Last Supper, he ‘took ’the cup.

Jesus is not a passive recipient! He takes the initiative. He is the manifestation of God’s love for us - God has taken the initiative to seek us out, to make of us partakers in the Resurrection of Christ.

Jesus invites the disciples, and invites us, to “Take” the Bread of life. We cannot be given it, we must “take” it. Our participation in the Eucharist can never be passé, disinterested, mundane or routine. Christ Jesus, Risen from the dead, invites us to “Take” his Body, to “Take” his blood.

In doing so we say “Amen.” We are active participants in what we celebrate in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. We become witnesses, that is, bearers, of Christ’s Paschal Mystery; we are the Body of Christ. We carry in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that in us may be manifest his Resurrection.

Happy Easter, Fr. Sean