

Dear Brothers and Sisters



The disciples did not recognise 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 only recognize him at the Breaking of the bread, prepared by their listening to Jesus' words to them along the journey. This Sunday we cannot attend Mass. We cannot participate in the Breaking of the Bread. However we can listen to Jesus' words.

Last week I watched a podcast by Chadd Wyatt, a retired Navy Seal. Asked what was the main thing he took away from his Navy Seal BUDS training, he said 'the power of the spoken word'.

During training, his best friend was thinking about quitting. He thought about it, but one morning he actually said "I don't think I'm going to be able to do this." From that moment it was all over. The guy rang the bell that morning and quit the Seal training.

Chadd Wyatt said his friend would have been able to complete BUDS, but as soon as he said those words, they became a reality, and determined the direction he was going to take.

The power of the spoken word. The Disciples in today's Gospel are walking along the road to Emmaus. They are speaking. Until that point they had thoughts, perhaps "What the heck happened?" "How could God have allowed this to happen?" "We had such high hopes about Jesus, but he ended up crucified and killed." All their dreams and projections had been smashed. That is certainly what they were thinking. They probably had thoughts of fear, panic, uncertainty, doubt, worry, disappointment.

But then they gave voice to their thoughts. Their thoughts become reality. The Gospel says they were downcast.

Then Jesus appears at their side, and speaks other words to them. Jesus' words make their hearts burn within them. Listening to His words, their fear, panic, distress, worry, disappointment, are gone.

As we experience this pandemic, with the lockdown, the social distancing, and not knowing how or when all this will be over, we can do so in one of two ways.

We can listen to the fear, panic, worry around us, and give voice to it.

Or we can listen to another word, and give voice to it.

Christ Jesus, Risen, accompanies us on our journey. He speaks words of life to us.

His words are expressed in the beautiful prayer of St. Teresa of Avila:

Let nothing disturb you, Let nothing frighten you, All things are passing away, God never changes, Patience obtains all things, Whoever has God lacks nothing. God alone suffices.

Happy Easter, Fr. Sean