

Third Sunday of Easter  
26 April 2020  
Saint Marcus Saint Lawrence

## *Can I Recognize?*

Are you the only one in Jerusalem who has not heard about what happened to Jesus of Nazareth? We thought that he would be the one to redeem Israel. These were the words of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Why didn't they recognize that it was Jesus? It wasn't because they were stupid or ignorant. One reason was because they hadn't yet experienced a person rising from the dead and being glorified. Another reason Luke give us is that their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him. Was this because Jesus didn't allow Himself to be recognized or was it because the disciples' preconceived notions of the messiah didn't allow them to? The answer is both. The part of this reality for us that is most important in these days is that of their preconceived notions. So often for us human beings the most immovable obstructions in becoming Christians is not who Jesus really is and who His Church is but who people think they are. Many misunderstandings come from misinformation and people trusting their own information more than trusting the information God provides about Himself. This was the situation of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They weren't less intelligent than anyone else, they just had the idea that Jesus would be the messiah to deliver them from Roman rule. Their understanding of the messiah was formed more by their situation and culture they lived in than by the scriptures and the teachings of Jesus while they had followed him. They didn't know that they didn't know. Yet notice how Jesus deals with them. He comes to be with them He doesn't ridicule them. He simply walks with them and educates them about what was written about Him in the Old Testament. He takes them where they are at, in their cultural and societal misunderstandings and He "walks" them to a proper understanding of who the Messiah is and then when He breaks the bread, they get it! The light bulb moment! They recognize Him!!! This is why Sacred Scripture is so important for us as Catholic Christians. If we are to recognize the Risen Lord Jesus in our lives, we have to strive to understand who He reveals Himself to be in the scriptures. There are plenty of cultural voices out there who know little to nothing about the Lord who take it upon themselves to tell us what God cares about, what He doesn't care about, and who He is. Yet who gave them the authority or the right to speak on behalf of God? As human beings we like it when people speak for themselves and walk the talk right? Well the

prophets and Jesus Himself have done just that. God has revealed Himself through their “walks of teaching and examples of suffering.” This is an important concept both for our own spiritual life but also when we interact with other people. When people say things like, “Well I don’t go to Church because.....,” or “I don’t think God cares about.....” Whatever their reason is, we can engage them that with something like, well how do you know that? Seeds of doubt are good in this instance! Easter can make us like Peter who becomes very bold! He too had his misunderstandings about the Lord. In Matthew 16 right after he professes that Jesus is the Messiah, he then chides Jesus for saying that He will have to suffer. We are in good company. Peter, too, had been misinformed about who the Messiah was to be. There are two keys to this Easter mystery: First to continue to get know the Lord authentically through the scriptures and through those who also know Him as He truly reveals Himself. The second key is to be ok with gently but carefully challenging the misinformation caused by cultural or societal desires which form so many people but have little to do with who God really is. Happy Easter!