

April 19, 2015 The Road to Emmaus Homily

Brothers and sisters, sometime in the late 1960's Malcolm Muggeridge, a prominent writer and television personality, along with a film crew from the B.B.C. (British Broadcasting) traveled to the Holy Land to make a documentary on the Life of Christ. In his native country, Mr. Muggeridge was a celebrity who was easily recognizable because of his distinctive features, outspoken views on a variety of controversial subjects and his ubiquitous presence on television.

Unknown to the viewing public, his Christian faith was in tatters and he was a deeply troubled soul looking for answers to some of life's most perplexing questions. The time he spent in the Holy land turned out to be one of the defining moments of his life. Here's what happened.

"The Road to Emmaus" was the final installment of the documentary series. Mr. Muggeridge and his crew camped out on the road linking Jerusalem and Emmaus. One day, while walking alone on that famous road, Mr. Muggeridge had an overwhelming sense of another presence. He was mystified. He neither saw nor heard any voice. And then his heart began to burn within him. Much to his surprise, he ultimately came to the realization that the other Presence was Christ Himself! Mr. Muggeridge recounted his experience in a book he later wrote entitled, *"Jesus Rediscovered"*. He wrote: "On every walk, Christ came to tell us, whether to Emmaus, Wimbledon, or Timbuktu, there is one stranger waiting to accompany us along the way, if we want Him".

The disciples mentioned in the opening words of today's gospel are the two to whom Christ joined himself on the road to Emmaus. He entered their home. He revealed Himself in the breaking of bread. (Lk.24:30-31) Still, the two disciples struggle to believe in the Resurrection. Jesus then attempts to ease their doubts. He draws near to them to assuage their misgivings. He speaks to them. In addition, he opens their minds. The disciples react with amazement and joy (Lk.24:41). A total stranger is now a friend and a savior.

Two centuries later, Jesus lives! He is alive! He continues to reveal himself to us through his word and his presence in the Eucharist! He shows us the true path!

What lessons can we derive from today's gospel? First, the episode recorded in today's gospel occurred on a Sunday afternoon. For us Christians every Sunday is, so to speak, a celebration of Easter. Sunday is not the end of a weekend, but the first day of the week, a new era, and a new life beginning with Christ's Resurrection from the dead! Second, Jesus wishes to ease our doubts as well. He wishes to capture our attention. In our life, there are far too many distractions. He speaks but we fail to listen. We get caught up in the events of the day. At times, they weigh on us, sadden us, and worry us. Third, by breaking open the scriptures (Lk.24:45) the two disciples experienced an extraordinary transformation. The comforting words of Jesus "set their hearts burning within them" (Lk:24:32).

Let us pray! Lord Jesus, open the scriptures for us, make our hearts burn while you speak to us. Help us daily to recognize you in the breaking of the bread. On our pilgrimage of faith, let us be mindful and appreciative that Christ walks with us as a friend, and not as a stranger. He assures us of his presence and promises us a share in his resurrection.

Amen!