

[Readings: Acts 3:13-15; 17-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 2:1-5a; Luke 24:35-48]

What happens when little kids fall down and hurt themselves? They would usually run to their mommy or their daddy to show them their “boo-boo.” And mommy or daddy would swoop them up in hugs and kisses and tend to their bruised egos as well as their skinned knees. For a child to show his or her wound is an act of trust in a moment of vulnerability. It’s also a chance for the parent to respond with concern, love, and care. It’s a moment that captures the humanity of both the wounded and the one who cares. Last time this happened to me and my parents, I was about ...27 years old!

When the four of us kids were in grade school, one warm summer evening, when we were sitting with our parents on the front porch steps, three of us older kids decided to have a contest to see who could run the fastest – backwards! Of course, two of us fell onto the sidewalk trying to do this, scraping our knees and hands. Running to our mom for sympathy, she had one rule of thumb when it came to injuries: “If you’re not bleeding, you’re fine!”

Then, to distract us from self-pity, mom said, “Check the sidewalk. Is the sidewalk OK? Do you know how much it costs to fix a broken sidewalk?” No more pain! No more self-pity!

Jesus shows His wounds to the uncertain disciples who had been confused since they first heard about the empty tomb. In showing His vulnerability, He reverses the usual roles. He is taking care of them, tending to their doubts and to their wounded hearts so full of fear that they had lost Him.

In showing His wounds, Jesus makes that which had seemed incomprehensible somehow understandable. As long as He remained only a spirit, they would have no way to understand that He had risen from the dead. He uses these physical ways to manifest His presence.

Another way He makes His real presence known is by eating with them. Our God has wounds and our God eats with us. It seems as though Jesus the Christ would fit naturally into any family I know.

How many of you have a friend in St. Anthony? Most of us know him as the patron saint of lost items. Not only do I invoke him when I misplace something, I now invoke him when I have lost my train of thought! Doesn't it happen almost instantaneously that when we invoke the name of St. Anthony that we find what we have lost?

Behavioral scientists say that it is not a minor miracle at all. They say we are guilty of "selective vision." Our focus is limited to a certain field of vision. Once we de-stress, we easily find what we have lost. I think I'll stick with my original assumption that this is a minor miracle!

"Selective vision" is what happens to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and to the disciples gathered in today's Gospel passage.

I wish we could hear the whole Emmaus story, the 35 verses that precede today's Gospel, as it is my very favorite Gospel passage! Anyway, the disciples' vision was limited. Their belief was narrow. They couldn't believe what they were seeing. So Jesus needs to make clearer for them what they are looking at.

As the rabbis say, the whole Bible can be boiled down to four words: We sin. God saves. Those last two words transform our human history into salvation history. Luke's accounts of Jesus' Resurrection appearances include Jesus in the role of "Bible teacher." The disciples on the road to Emmaus and those in the upper room experience Jesus in bodily form and also in His role as rabbi, as a teacher. He helps them "connect the dots" of their Jewish tradition so they can see that the Resurrection was the fulfillment of all that their ancestors had hoped for.

Easter helps us locate ourselves. God's grace is not only for biblical times but also for our times. We are not included as an afterthought, but as the intended beneficiary of God's grace since the beginning of time. We are His disciples here and now, in this time and place. "You are my witnesses to all of these things."

How does a person become a disciple of Jesus? The First Letter of John has an answer: You first have to know Him. And how do you know Him? By keeping His commandments and "His Word."

His commandments are more than just the Ten Commandments. Check the Gospels to see what Jesus says about “the commandments,” including the greatest commandment: Love God. Love your neighbor. Love yourself.

The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount: Blessed are you when you do this. When you do that.

The Last Judgement in Matthew Chapter 25: “Whatever you did to these least ones of Mine, you did it to Me.”

Our Second Reading from the First Letter of John says quite bluntly that those who do not follow the commandments or “His Word” are liars.

Here are some questions to ask ourselves if we are being honest with our truest selves.

How do my experiences challenge my faith?

What do I see and still not yet believe?

How has forgiveness moved me to repent?

This week, reflect on those sinful tendencies that still enslave us. What will we do this week to turn them over to Christ? Is Christ real for us, or is He still just a ghost in our imagination? Why are we troubled? Touch Him in this Eucharist and see, and let Him touch us and heal our lives. AMEN! ALLELUIA!