

Third Sunday of Easter - B -2018
Acts 3.12-15,17-19///1John 2.1-5///Luke 24.35-48

→all of us I am sure at some time or another have attended a Grand Opening....

→perhaps it was a store or a new restaurant or maybe even the opening night of a play or concert

→we all know the drill...there is a lot of hype...an advertising blitz...door buster sales and discounts....all done in the hope of creating a buzz for the new business and getting off to a strong start.

→and when the long awaited day arrives we join in line with other eager patrons waiting for the door to open with anticipation and excitement..

→who doesn't love an grand opening or an opening night....

→and conversely...don't we sometimes wince at just the opposite....the sign of a closing...

→when we hear of a store closing or perhaps a restaurant....we make an effort to make sure to visit one last time...to get one last bargain...one last taste...one last moment before it closes for good...

→closings are often met with sadness and disappointment.

→and if closed stores or closed restaurants bring about frustration and disappointment... then just think when we come up someone with a closed mind....

→we may be trying to talk or explain something to them, reason or teach them

→...//...and you can tell that your words are just bouncing off them like sleet on a windshield

→for those of you who are parents or teachers or friends you know exactly what I am talking about...

→and just imagine if you will...how God feels when he is trying to get his message across or impart his words into our hearts...and that effort is met with a big CLOSED sign. [as well]

PAUSE

→today our Gospel reading deals with that very same predicament...

→throughout his ministry on earth...Jesus tried to teach and practice his message in front of his disciples, in the presence of crowds and in front of religious and political leaders.

→his message was sometimes received with great joy and faith...sometimes it was rejected outright...and often it was misunderstood or even ignored

→Jesus certainly faced many minds where the doors were tightly CLOSED...back then...and even today...

PAUSE

→and so...this [evening] morning...we hear about an appearance of Jesus taking place just after he had appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus

→though they didn't recognize him at first...their hearts began to burn within them as he talked with them along the road

→and then at the table that evening, as he broke the bread...their eyes and hearts were opened.....those disciples at Emmaus had turned their "CLOSED" sign around to "OPEN"

→today's reading...which follows immediately after the Emmaus story, finds Jesus suddenly appearing in the midst of the entire group of disciples...

→he greets them with a word of "peace"...but they are so startled and frightened that they think he is a ghost....

→believing that when you are dead...you are dead...

→in other words...their minds were CLOSED...locked by what they thought they knew about life and death

→and so Jesus eats some fish in front of them...not because he was hungry...but rather to show them that he wasn't a figment of their imagination....that he was indeed alive...

→in doing so he OPENS their CLOSED minds

→J. brings understanding and meaning to his disciples about all the events that had been unfolding over the past couple of days and weeks

PAUSE

→theses disciples.....

--....who had put all their hope in J. and then saw them shattered as he died a terrible death

---events and happenings that they didn't understand....or could accept.....

→experience **today.....THEIR special moment....THEIR GRAND OPENING moment that gives meaning to their life....**

PAUSE

→it leads one to wonder if this could also be the GRAND OPENING that God is seeking for you and me today as well...

→could it be that God is at our door...waiting for our CLOSED sign to turn around to

OPEN

→in today's gospel reading J. appears and eats with his disciples asking them to **believe** in the resurrection

→AND THEN HE UNFOLDS THE MYSTERY, EXPLAINING TO THEM THE MEANING OF HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.

→how all the Scriptures and the events of his ministry reveal that the Messiah had to suffer and die because of our sins,

→and how through the love and grace of the Father, the Messiah would rise to save us all

-----the mystery is unfolded

---the mystery that God is a loving God

---that God is a forgiving God

---that God is a saving God.....

---AND....just like the disciples today.....you and me are being asked to believe in the resurrection as well

to believe in the death and resurrection of Christ when we are faced with illness and tragedy

when we are faced with sadness and death,

frustration and despair

anger and hopelessness

---it is at those times in life that our eyes need to be opened to the presence of Christ, to the love of God and to the hope of eternal life

→today helps unfold the mystery for us....explaining why J. died, and why he rose

that --he died out of love for you and me

and that --he rose out of love for you and me

→...for the disciples their eyes were suddenly opened

they recognized Jesus and they knew he was alive

→may the same be true for you and me

→may our eyes always be open

→may our faith continue to grow strong

→and may our celebration today and every week....

→ be for us.....a moment when our sometimes closed hearts, eyes and soul....experience A
GRAND OPENING to the love, presence of the Lord in each one of us.

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