

Third Sunday of Easter / Earth Day
April 22 & 23, 2023

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Good evening/ morning Happy Easter Season!

It is so great to be here at ALL SAINTS again. I want to thank Fr. Daily, The Creation Care Team and the community here for your wonderful hospitality.

In the gospel that was just proclaimed, the disciples were fleeing Jerusalem which had become a place of terror beyond imagining. All their hopes were dashed and broken. The promise that the Messiah had come was gone, shattered in the terrible shadow of the cross.

For a moment, let's pause with them on that road.

Let's feel what these disciples must have been feeling. We have been in a similar place in our lives. Perhaps we are in that very place now. We have experienced the loss of a beloved one – a husband, wife, child, a dear relative or friend. Life turns black and hopeless. We are left aghast and empty. We ask ourselves, "Why?", "What now?" For the 2 disciples and for us, Jesus draws near. He listens to the story of the tragedy. He feels the pain of loss. Jesus speaks compelling words. Words which explain God's plan for the Christ. Words that are strangely comforting.

The disciples yearn for more, so they ask Jesus to be with them, to linger awhile and to break bread. Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it and shares it with them. In a flashpoint of recognition, they know, the Lord is here with them. The Lord is risen indeed just as the women had proclaimed! Their hearts were set on fire! They return to Jerusalem to share this amazing news – Jesus, the Christ is alive and among them! In this amazing Easter Season we need to take this walk to Emmaus. We look around at our world and situations are dark, frightening, overwhelming! It is in these times that Jesus draws near to us. His words are loving and reassuring. He speaks to us in the Scriptures and in prayer. He soothes us in the comforting words of our community. Jesus feeds us when we gather as community and he again breaks bread with us.

We are given the very Bread of Life.

Our eyes are opened to the beauty and abundance that flourishes in spite
of tragedy and heartbreak.

Our hearts are set ablaze with the desire to live in joy and compassion.

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This is the wonder of the Easter event. Nothing, **Nothing** can ever or will ever be the same again. Jesus the Christ is Risen, the Earth experiences a second creation! The energy, the hope, the imagination and creativity of the Holy One that burst forth at the moment of the beginning of the cosmos has again flared forth in the Paschal Mystery. Our world is completely transformed! We are called to be disciples of this amazing transformation, we are co-creators of the *kin*dom* of God! We are called to share the assurance that all life is reborn and renewed.

On our Emmaus walk we also turn our attention to nature. Our hearts and imaginations are set afire by the wonders and works of the first scriptures – the Book of Creation. We realize that we are part of both the crucifixion of our Earth and in the restoration of our precious planet.

In *Laudato Si*, Chapter 6, Pope Francis reflects on the mystical meaning of being deeply connected with creation. He invites us to contemplate Mother Earth – being awestruck by her beauty, being delighted by her creativity and being grateful for the lavishness of her blessings!

Our Emmaus walk brings together the most profound understandings of our faith: the sacredness of creation, the wisdom of the scriptures, and the Eucharist.

Pope Francis says that, “The Eucharist is the “greatest exaltation “of all that is created. The Eucharist is itself an act of Cosmic love. The Eucharist joins heaven and Earth; it embraces and penetrates all of creation. Thus the Eucharist is also a source of light and motivation for our concerns for the environment directing us to be stewards of all of creation.” [236]

As we continue this marvelous walk to Emmaus, let us reflect more deeply on these three gifts of our faith – creation, the scriptures and the Eucharist. All these are lived most fully in community. All these are leading us to a transformation of our lives into the very life of Christ.

Let us go forth like those disciples and practice resurrection!