

3 Easter yr a: The Disruption at Emmaus

Acts 2:14a- 36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

The Rev. Paul D. Allick, The Church of the Advent, April 26, 2020

To be a Christian is to be ready to be transformed. To be ready for transformation in Christ means being open to disruptions.

This runs contrary to what we expect. My experience with institutional Christianity is that we seek stasis. Even when stasis is unproductive or even contributing to our failures. We seek never wavering routines. When things change, we get nervous. I understand this. I like routine. I like to know what to expect. I value tradition.

But as I pray from the Prayer Book and listen closely to Scripture, I see clearly that my religion is not about security. It's about an ever-evolving and maturing relationship with Christ, with other believers, and with the world around me.

This growing up in Christ can be mentally, emotionally, and spiritually challenging. It is difficult for us to let go of our ways of seeing and reacting and to accept God's vision for us.

Transformation is about changing our minds. This is hard in a polarized culture: you can't change your mind; you have to pick your side and fight for it. Fight for it even to an illogical end. That's a very challenging environment in which to remain open to the Holy Spirit acting among us.

Today we remember the great disruption that occurred on the road to Emmaus. These two disciples are walking down the road in a confused and distressed state. Their teacher

has been executed. They were waiting for the redemption of Israel; expecting Jesus to become an earthly King.

Sure, some other disciples were telling them that they had seen him raised from the dead but these two were too upset to believe it. All that they believed about God and religion was keeping them from seeing what God was actually doing.

They don't recognize Christ. This stranger begins to help them sort through their confusion and grief. "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures."

They invite him to dinner. "At the table with them he took bread blessed and broke it, and gave it to them then their eyes were opened and they recognized him."

Something outside of their religious box was happening. They were transformed. Their hearts were burning within them. Their experience of transformation caused them to run and tell others. What they found in this experience was so much more life giving and transformative than what they wanted to find.

In the insecurity and confusion of that moment they found the true purpose of Christ in their lives. This was not an earthly kingdom, an external, outside of us experience but a heavenly, supernatural kingdom that actually lives and grows within our hearts.

They experienced the Holy Eucharist: The Word of God was proclaimed on the way and the bread was blessed and broken at the table. They were made fully conscious of the risen Christ fully present to them.

Comfortable routines don't open our eyes. It takes something new to awaken us out of the slumber of our routines and assumptions.

I think we've just come upon one of those experiences.

In this time of pandemic, we have a choice just as those disciples on their way to Emmaus had: we can focus solely on the confusion, frustration and ambiguity of this time or we can search for possibilities of transformation. Transformation as individual disciples and as the church.

God has not left us in this time. What is God saying to you in your life right now? What is God saying to the Church?

Almighty God open the eyes of our faith that we may behold Christ in all his redeeming work. For we have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable seed through the living and enduring word of God.