

# TRINITY NEWS

## Easter III Luke 24:13-35 The Emmaus Pilgrimage: We Never Walk Alone

Our own pilgrimage is intertwined with the stories of our co-pilgrims. Pilgrimage always has the note of mystery at its end. The deepest pilgrimages are made with a holy place in view or a holy person to meet. In other words it is about something transformational that makes a difference by taking part in the pilgrimage. Jesus is the ultimate Temple of the holy one for us. We should refer to the text at John 2:21 where the writer comments that “the temple he had had spoken of was his body.” We can see Jesus’ pilgrimage in Luke’s gospel in particular because it is the thread on which Luke hangs the story of Jesus. Luke is the inventor of Christian pilgrimages. We follow Jesus in Luke’s Gospel all the way from Bethlehem to the Ascension of the risen Lord. We follow him then in our liturgical year and in our own pilgrimage. Luke picks up the thread of pilgrimage in the Emmaus walk at 24:13-35. It could have ended at the Cross. But the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances stamped Jesus earthly pilgrimage with glimpses of the eternal.

Luke invites his readers into the story. We are constrained to go into the guestroom with Jesus. He breaks bread with them and us and opens the scriptures for us. He invites us into the long pilgrimage of his people. He may have reverently unrolled a scroll of the Hebrew text as he broke open the Scriptures and their meaning. As he is no longer constrained within the divine incognito, he makes himself known to us through “the Spirit of Jesus” (Acts 16:7) and we rise up to adore him. At the very moment that we think we have captured his presence and reality, he vanishes. We look around the room and run outside, but the road is empty. We now have to feel his presence inside us as he walks along the road with us wherever we go. We will look for him in the breaking of the bread and he is perceived when he opens the Scriptures for us. We will turn to him and ask him about the meaning of some texts. I had a query from a beloved parishioner who knows the Scriptures well about the words in John 20:23 relating to sins forgiven and sins retained. We need to scan the text carefully in order to answer such questions. What does it mean that some sins are retained and therefore not forgiven? We need to

turn inward to our own stillness while the Holy Spirit configures the words of Jesus for us if we are to answer such matters. We cannot do it adequately on the basis of the text alone and we need to go and sit at the feet of the Master and meditate about it. The response I heard was to look at the one who retains the sin not the one who commits the sin and needs forgiveness. It may mean that if we hold back on forgiveness, then we also hold back on removing the effect of the sin and thus cause it to be retained. Every negative act is retroactive in some sense and it may rebound on us. Forgiveness is a gift, not a possession. Jesus himself is the best commentator on the stories about him and his teaching. He does not teach us only in the Scriptures but he is also the teacher within us. Approaching the Scriptures without a due sense of the work of the Holy Spirit may lead to stiff and lifeless interpretations. Pilgrimages are living interpretations of the mystery that is being sought. Christian pilgrimages are never walked alone.

Bishop Arthur Jones

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### THIS WEEK:

#### **Wednesday, April 22.**

- Bible study, 10 a.m.
- Group discussion, 7:30 p.m., Parish office.

### NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:

Acts 4:32-37; Psalm 23

1 John 3:1-8; John 10:11-16

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