

In today's gospel lesson we hear about two disciples who were returning home to Emmaus after Jesus' crucifixion who unexpectedly got a **glimpse of the holy**. I don't know about you, but I have been on this road to Emmaus. Deeply troubled, wondering if Jesus of Nazareth were really the Christ. I wonder; have you ever been on this road to Emmaus, heading away from the resurrected Jesus?

The short version of my Emmaus story is that I thought I wasn't going to get to be what God was calling me to be, a priest. I felt abandoned by God. I was at least half way to Emmaus before discovering that the person who was



supposed to have called me before the long holiday weekend and given me the good news simply FORGOT to call. My **glimpse of the holy** on my way to Emmaus was that Christ Jesus had been with me all along. Sounds so simple now. What's YOUR Emmaus story?

I figure that a priest you might have known, some of you, named Jim Green might have been familiar with the Emmaus Road, as well. Jim was our beloved first Rector for almost 30 years. When he came to Resurrection 18 months after we began, he tried to get OUR Vestry to rename THIS church Emmaus Church. The way I figure it, this might well have been the only thing our Vestry ever truly denied Jim. Of course, our story today, our affordable housing development story, speaks more clearly to our larger church and our world given that we are Church of the Resurrection, not Emmaus Church. So maybe there was a long-term reason Jim's vision didn't prevail. If you look out in our Memorial Garden, though, Jim's good friend Craig Biddle III made a statue for him of the Emmaus characters, Jim loved that story so much.

In today's gospel lesson the resurrected Christ Jesus joined two of his disciples who were heading home to Emmaus after his crucifixion and asked them what was troubling **them**. Amazingly the two didn't recognize Jesus; we can't explain this scientifically, and neither could

Luke, who says only that “their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” In fact, none of the hundreds of disciples to whom Jesus appeared in his dozen or so post-resurrection appearances recognized him at first. What is important to note here is that catching **a glimpse of the holy** often involves a breaking open of our expectations. We don’t always see the holy when and where we expect to see the holy.

This is what happened on the road to Emmaus. The incognito Jesus, this Jesus who went initially unrecognized, joined the two disciples and began to explain the scriptures to them in a new way—in the very way that Luke will later use to reinterpret the Jewish scriptures to explain Jesus as the Messiah. Here we see the first way that Jesus broke open their understanding of reality, allowing them to catch **a glimpse of the holy**. He took the scriptures and interpreted them in a new way—in the way that is very familiar to us today—in a way which made Jesus’ death and Resurrection seem utterly necessary rather than a ludicrous impossibility.

If Jesus were here today, how would he break scripture open for us?

There was a view even in Jesus’ day, just as there is now, that Jesus’ disciples “made the resurrection up,” just made up the story of Jesus’ Resurrection, and then sat around rearranging Jewish scriptures to support their fiction. Luke says “No!” to this belief and Jesus manages to call us “foolish” and “slow of heart” in the process. Luke shows us that Jesus himself authored this new interpretation of scripture, this breaking open of scripture. In doing so Jesus lets us all **glimpse the holy**.

This past week our Bishop announced a peace and reconciliation initiative between the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia and Truro Church, a large congregation in Fairfax that left the Episcopal Church in 2006 over, in part, a difference of opinion about how to re-interpret scripture. In the end we each have to decide how to interpret scripture for our time. In this case, though, Christ Jesus was the one doing the interpreting. The shift was cataclysmic.

Notice what Jesus did next, though. When the two disciples arrived in Emmaus he walked ahead “as if he were going on.” Jesus had followed them all the way from his resurrection just to break open their closed minds and hearts to the reality of his continued existence, and then he was seemingly prepared to walk away. It wasn’t until they invited Jesus to stay with them, urged Jesus to stay with them, that Jesus entered their lives in a whole new way. We, too, have this

choice. We can accept Jesus into our lives, or continue to go our own way, dead to the reality of Jesus' presence with us.

Because these disciples invited Jesus in, though, we know what else it takes to break us open to Jesus' presence with us, to break us open to the holy. You see, it was when they were at table, and when Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them that they recognized him for the Messiah that he truly is. Then Jesus vanished from sight.

Or did he? In a few minutes we, too, will break bread with Jesus, a Jesus who has followed us all the way from his resurrection, a Jesus whom our eyes will not see present among us, but who is present none-the-less. In a few minutes we, too, will take bread, bless it, break it, and give it to each other in recognition that Jesus is somehow present in our meal, that Jesus is present and at work in and through each of us.

How will today's Eucharist break YOUR eyes open to the presence of Christ Jesus among us?

In our liturgy every Sunday we catch far more than a mere **glimpse of the holy**, we will catch the whole glorious vision, the whole reality of God at work in our world and in our lives. We will share this vision and align ourselves to God's purpose, because the holy is not something to be merely glimpsed and shut away for our own use. Instead, the holy is all about doing God's work in the world, pointing ever to God rather than to ourselves.

We, too, can catch **a glimpse of the holy** and allow it to alter our whole existence. We can participate in the holy in the small things that we do for others, without need for recognition. We can participate in the holy in our growth in knowledge and love of God, and in our increase in love for all whom God has made. We can participate in the holy in our acceptance and faith despite our adversity. We can participate in the holy in our doing of justice and in our love of kindness. We can participate in the holy through our tears. We can participate in the holy by telling others that Jesus is risen. And, if the Emmaus story tells us anything at all, it tells us that we can glimpse Christ Jesus in the strangers among us.

In the end the two transformed disciples got up "that same hour" and returned to Jerusalem to tell others about what they had experienced. Having caught a glimpse of the holy, can we keep the Good News of Jesus' Resurrection for ourselves?

Alleluia! Christ is risen.