

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Apr 23rd 2014

I find today's readings have a sort of backwards progression. The text from the Acts of the Apostles sets the stage indicating what is possible in the name of Jesus when faith is present. The Psalm promises those who seek the Lord will not be forgotten. The Gospel begins with two of Jesus' followers in a dejected and confused state.

The Gospel leaves me reflecting on how much we miss when we see without really seeing. This brought to mind a story about two men discussing a pair of horses that they have owned for a number of years. The first man admits that although he has had the horses for a long time he still cannot tell one from the other. The second man confesses that he too had this problem for the longest time, until he eventually realized that the brown horse had longer ears than the white one.

My experiences of the last 24 hours have shown how inobservant I really am. The stop light changes and someone honks before I notice. I am waiting for someone at the airport to exit from security and I do not notice the unexpected acquaintance who emerges until they call my name. My mind has me looking and waiting for something or someone else. My focus is elsewhere. Recently I find my senses particularly dull. I attribute some of this to an experience that left me feeling hurt and forsaken. I would not describe myself as someone who is looking outward when I am in this state. With this background I find it very easy to put myself in the place of Cleopas or even more so in the role of the second unnamed disciple in today's Gospel. I can imagine how I would feel having just lost someone who I treasured in a rapid and truly unpleasant chain of events. I can imagine the disciples' depression following someone who they had believed would bring a new and better tomorrow and who instead appears to meet an intimidating and cruel end. For these men on the road to Emmaus there had been some potentially hopeful news, but I find myself thinking that the reports of a spiritual leader who was no longer in his tomb, would more naturally have lead me to suppose that his body had been stolen rather than resurrected. I find it easy to understand how in their current state of mind "their eyes were prevented from recognizing him".

The Gospel concludes with the disciples eyes opened. This grace will grow and will bring Jesus' followers to the state where with this grace they will continue on in his footsteps offering a new interpretation of the Passover events.

My prayer today is for this grace that brings an understanding of both the Passion and the Resurrection of Jesus. Lord, you shared this gift with Cleopas and his fellow disciple on the road to Emmaus.

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the

breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen. -An Evening Collect from the Book of Common Prayer

Mike Cherney