

Homily 3rd Sunday Easter Emmaus 2023

With the arrival of Spring there is an energy in the air that almost impels us to go out and walk in the countryside, along a canal, through some woods and throw off the winter clothing that kept us housebound for too long.

There comes a time in our faith journey when we want to do the same, to take a walk to reflect on our faith, what it means to us, where it is taking us whether we are a true friend of Jesus or whether we are too self-centred. For some it is a time to make a retreat and be helped along the road and helped with their reflections, but others prefer to make a pilgrimage and journey with others, to share their challenging questions, to be challenged and to challenge, to learn and to inspire. This is common to all faiths which shows how important pilgrimage is. It seems that in Russia, before the revolution, there was a tradition that, when the family had grown up and your spouse had died, to make a pilgrimage across Russia visiting the various shrines and places that spoke of God's presence. Families believed they would be blessed whenever a pilgrim knocked at the door and would offer them a warm welcome, food and lodging. In return, the pilgrim would tell stories about his or her experiences of their journey. The pilgrim in the Emmaus story was Jesus and he shared his story with the two disciples as told in the Old Testament and opened their eyes in the breaking of bread which, for us, is the Mass, the Eucharist.

So let me tell you a story about a group of frogs who were traveling across a forest in search of a pond. While hopping around, two frogs fall into a deep pit. The other frogs gather around the pit and expressed their concern about the situation. As the two frogs try to jump out of the deep pit, the other frogs discourage them by saying how impossible it was to jump out of the pit because it was far too deep.

However, the two frogs chose to ignore the discouraging words of the others and continue trying to jump out of the pit. They tried very, very hard, putting all their effort into jumping out of the pit while the frogs watching from the top kept telling them to give up.

Eventually, one of the frogs became disillusioned and decided to give up trying to jump because he believed it was hopeless and he died. However, the other frog continued jumping as hard as it could.

After an immense struggle, it finally managed to jump out of the pit alive. All the other frogs were surprised and asked how it managed to keep on jumping in spite of them telling him to give up. The frog explained that it was deaf and assumed that everyone was cheering for him on and encouraging him.

Your words are very important. When your words are helpful and supportive they will encourage others to do better and be better, just as the words of Jesus helped and inspired the two disciples going to Emmaus with his words.

Eucharist means thanksgiving and, in the Mass, we are given the opportunity to thank Jesus for all the help he gives us!!

A little old lady sold home-made biscuits on the street corner for fifty pence each. Every day, a young lawyer would exit his office building at lunchtime, and as he passed her biscuit stand, he'd give her fifty pence. However, he never took a biscuit. This went on for nearly five years. Even though they never spoke, every day he'd leave fifty pence, they'd make eye contact, and she would nod her gratitude as he walked away without a biscuit.

Finally, one day as the lawyer passed her stand and gave her fifty pence, the biscuit lady said to him. *"Sir, I greatly appreciate your business. You are my best customer, but you need to know something. With the current inflation, the price of biscuits has now gone up to **seventy pence!!**"*