

## **Opening Their Minds (and Ours)**

**Intro.** The appearances by the risen Lord to his friends continue. Since Easter, we have heard Mark's and John's; this time from Luke's. The stories are similar: several disciples are not present with the community when the Lord appears and there is the same fear and disbelief. They slowly work their way to belief.

**I.** The context for today's gospel is the two disciples who walked to Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. Like Thomas' absence we are not told why. The two disciples left, not only the community, but also left town deep in grief at the death of the Lord. On the road, they met a stranger who asked what they were discussing so seriously. They told the story. The stranger explained how

those events were the fulfillment of scripture. At dinner when he broke the bread, they recognized the Lord and immediately returned to tell the other disciples. That might have been the fastest seven miles ever. They arrived just as the Lord did.

You might think there would be hugs all around. But terror still reigned in their hearts. They thought he was a ghost. By eating the fish he proved that wrong. The appearances were meant to bring the disciples to belief because they had work to do. The Lord wanted them to get ready for the next part of his plan – to get out of that locked room and open their minds for the mission of forgiveness.

Many of us have had a sudden understanding or realization of something important; the light finally goes on. Away from home for college, it dawned on

me that no one would know if I was going to church or not. I realized it was my choice to make: keep struggling with the faith I had grown up with or walk away from it. I decided to stick with and work on believing.

**Concl.** Fear caused the disciples to cower in a closed room. Fear caused their minds to be closed and locked to the good news of the resurrection. In the meeting with the two disciples going to Emmaus, the Lord made them tell the story of what happened in Jerusalem. Even in their telling of it, the lock on their minds did not spring open. The community of disciples back in Jerusalem also had to be reminded of the prophecies of scripture. He “opened their minds,” explaining the meaning: **he was the fulfillment.** The bottom line for the disciples was they were to be witnesses to “all the world.”

When the two disciples finally put the pieces together it was like “Wheel of Fortune” when someone solves the puzzle: lights flash, bells ding. The same with slot machines in Vegas. Or if you are a gamer, when you finally make it to the next level in your favorite video game. Sometimes it takes us a while to put the puzzle of our faith together and for our belief to grow. It is an on-going process. The same sign that helped the two disciples in Emmaus recognize the Lord, helps us recognize the Lord every week: in the breaking of the bread at the Eucharistic table.