

04/30/17 3 Easter A

-- We saw it in the Lenten season and we see it again today. What is the gospel all about? It's about Jesus encountering someone (two people this time), listening to them, instructing them and revealing himself to them.

-- The Lenten stories of the woman at the well and the man born blind both had a similar plot. Jesus encountered these marginal people where they were at, physically and spiritually, and led them to greater faith. And they became disciples of his word.

-- In the journey to Emmaus story, we encounter actual followers of Jesus. They've been let down, or so they think. Their hopes for their hero have been dashed, and he is no more. But, in fact, he is right beside them.

-- Like the man born blind, they cannot fully see yet. But Jesus is patient. He listens to them. He explains how the scriptures show that he had to suffer and die before being raised from the dead.

-- They listen to him with interest. It's inspiring, but not enough to bring them to full faith. That only happens when Jesus sits down with them and breaks bread with them. Their eyes are opened, and they go on to share the good news with their friends.

-- If this pattern sounds familiar, that's because it's what we do each time we come to Mass. After all, what do we do? We bring ourselves, just as we are. We admit our brokenness (Penitential Act) and offer our prayer.

-- Then we listen to God's word. We are reminded about how God worked in the world, both before and after Jesus came to save us.

-- We hear what Jesus did for the apostles on the night before he died, and then we break bread and share wine, which are now the Body and Blood of Christ.

-- Finally, we are sent forth into the world. We show our belief in the power of the Risen Lord. And we listen to the stories of others, both those who are struggling and those who have felt God's power.

-- Significantly, we encounter this gospel at St. Caspar's as a number of our young people are sharing in the Eucharist for the first time. They have listened to God's Word over the course of a couple of years. And now they will share in his Body and Blood.

-- Most of us here have done this for years. And it can easily become something we take for granted. But we really need the continual gift of Jesus' nourishment, just as we need to listen to his Word constantly.

-- For most, if not all, of us will be in the situation of those disciples on the road to Emmaus at one time or another. We will experience let downs and discouragement. So will these young people receiving Eucharist for the first time, as they grow older.

-- Jesus meets us where we are in life. He listens to us and offers us the encouragement and insight of God's word. But more than that. He offers us his Body and Blood as strength for our journey.

-- May we never allow that gift to be routine. We pray that our young people may frequently be nourished by Jesus' body and blood as well. For they will need that strength as they face the challenges of growing up in this world of ours.

-- As a last thought, this gospel encourages us to listen to and support one another on the journey of faith each of us takes. For we are not in this alone. We are called to support one another.

-- May our partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ today strengthen our hope in the power of the Risen Lord to support us in our life's work and to redeem the entire world.