

## **04/15/18 ..... 3 Easter B**

-- Two years ago I broke down. I finally got on Facebook. By now, I have about 130 Facebook friends. Like anybody on Facebook, some of my friends are closer friends than others.

-- Two of my close friends live in Seattle. I keep in touch with them, but they don't come back very often to the Toledo area. I find that there is no substitute for physical presence. Good friends have to make the effort to be with each other, despite the challenges to doing that.

-- One thing we find out about the Risen Jesus in the Easter season is that he needed to be in the presence of his disciples, his good friends. Jesus sought them out, even when they were locked up.

-- Our gospel today follows the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They encounter Jesus, though they don't recognize him at first. They only recognize him when they stop to break bread together.

-- They are so excited they run back to Jerusalem that same night. That's where this gospel picks up. They tell the other disciples what happened. Then, just as they finish, Jesus appears.

-- He needs to see them, to be in their presence. He assures them that it is really him. He allows them to touch him, and he eats with them. He is not a figment of their imagination. It is really Jesus, risen from the dead.

-- Just as it happened to those disciples, so Jesus seeks us out. Jesus' presence isn't the result of our personal efforts. Jesus comes to us, and that is what makes us Church.

-- And that is exactly what we are doing here. We are waiting for the Lord who will come to us. He comes to us in God's word. He comes to us as we break bread together. He comes to us as we consume the Body and Blood of Christ.

-- The disciples of Jesus didn't just remember how wonderful Jesus was and then say, "It really feels as if Jesus is alive once again." No, they experienced the Risen Jesus, in the flesh.

-- We don't come to worship merely to remember what Jesus did, living and dying a long time ago. We come to experience the true presence of Jesus Christ who seeks us out. We come to eat his body and drink his blood.

-- And, because we experience his true presence, he sends us forth to be his witnesses in the world, just as he sent those first disciples. He calls us to a change of heart and mind. And he asks us to invite others to a change of heart and mind as well.

-- Some of my friends on Facebook literally have thousands of so-called friends. But their true friends are those they make the effort to spend time with. True friends must be in each other's physical presence.

-- Jesus invites us to be in his presence. He seeks us out. He comes to us at Mass in the Word of God and in the Eucharist. He doesn't require us to do a lot of complicated things to seek him out. He only asks for our openness to his presence.

-- There is one difference between Jesus and us when it comes to nurturing this friendship. We are limited by time and space in the number of people who can be our true friends.

-- Jesus is not. Jesus offers all of us the true friendship that comes with his real presence. But he does this as we gather together as Church. We need to be here to experience the fullness of Jesus' presence.

-- He doesn't expect us to do a lot of homework in order to experience his presence. He only asks us to have open hearts, as those disciples had.

-- May we open ourselves to Jesus' presence as he comes to us today, in our gathering for this Eucharist.