

The Real Presence

Sermon notes for the sermon
Given by Rev. Dr. Gregory Young
Presented on Sunday, May 8, 2011

Intro: My dad loved taking photographs – slides. After he had a few rolls developed our family would all gather in the living room for slide night. It was a blessed time for us to relive past events in our shared life together.

One of my favorite photos which my dad took was at our Conference Camp, Mount Misery. The setting was a sandy path shaded by the over-hanging pines and oaks in the late spring. It was a picture of a father and son walking hand-in-hand. The photo evoked deep feelings of a loving relationship between parent and child, of the care and nurture of a child by a parent. It was a very simple picture that captured one of life's sacred moments – a heart-to-heart talk between a father and son.

Our Gospel reading today paints a similar picture. Cleopas and his friend, two followers of Jesus, walking away from Jerusalem crushed and defeated. All of their dreams and hopes had been lost with the crucifixion and death of Jesus. They were returning home to family, to work, to life the way it had always been – hard, unfair, going nowhere. Suddenly the risen Messiah enters into the picture and we can see, in our mind's eye the three of them walking on, together, toward Emmaus – a dirt road heading away from Jerusalem.

There was Jesus by their side, talking with them and teaching them and Cleopas and his companion did not recognize the risen Christ. Their hearts were racing within their chests as Jesus opened their eyes and their understanding of scripture but they did not recognize him. That is, until evening time when sitting at the dinner table. It was here that Cleopas and his friend finally recognized Jesus for who he was – the risen Christ.

As Jesus, the invited guest at the meal broke the bread their eyes were opened to the reality of Jesus.

Where do you find Jesus? Has he been walking beside you, speaking to you? Have you seen Him right next to you or are you like Cleopas and his friend, so wrapped up in the troubles of the world, the problems of your life, that you fail to see him right next to you? Today, as we celebrate this sacrament, we come face-to-face with the real presence of the crucified and risen Christ. If you have not seen Jesus lately, I hope that you will see him in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this cup. Jesus the Christ offers himself to us this day and every day, but especially today in this sacrament. Take, eat, drink and be filled with my death and life so that you can live as my disciples.

Just as the father and son in my dad's photograph captured a sacred, incarnational moment of love, so the celebration of this sacrament captures a sacred, incarnational event of God's love. As we bow in God's holy presence to receive the body and blood of Jesus, so we move from this table to become the real presence of Christ seeking to transform the world through the faithful living of his disciples.