

*Bishop Jodoin's Homely for the
3rd Sunday of Easter - April 26, 2020
In the Saint-Pierre-au-Liens church in Caraquet
(Broadcasted on the radio at 94,1 fm CKLE CJVA
and Live on the Diocese of Bathurst Facebook page)*

Today, we should thank the evangelist Saint Luke for having transmitted to us this account of the disciples of Emmaus, one of the most beautiful pages of the Gospels and a great source of joy for us. Because 2,000 years ago, on the road to Emmaus, a distance of about two hours on foot, there were two disciples ... a certain Cleophas and another whose name is unknown. Because now, that nameless disciple is each and every one of you: Christ is there walking with you and warming your heart.

Psalm 84, 5, a psalm of joy, says it well, *"How happy are those whose strength comes from you, who are eager to make the pilgrimage..."* (Ps 84, 5)

Yes, to all those who have faith, who believe in Christ who is present and living in their lives. For He who died on a cross for us is now risen, by the strength of God's love. He often precedes us on our life's journey during our moments of happiness (a reunion with a loved one, the birth of a child, a graduation, a first job, the arrival of grandchildren in our lives and many other significant moments). We also are in touch with God in moments of grace, when we admire the beauty of nature surrounding us, or before the vastness of the Universe. He is also there, present, during our dark moments. Even if we sometimes have the impression that he is absent. That he has abandoned us: during a breakup, the loss of a job and the financial insecurity which follows, the diagnosis of an incurable disease, the fear of having covid-19, a tragedy like the one that happened in Nova Scotia... where families lost a loved one and asked each day: Why this massacre? Why were my brother, sister, neighbor killed? Why is all this harm beating down on us, on our family, on ourselves? What have we done to God to deserve this?

The disciples of Emmaus were in this state of mind. They were waiting for a political messiah that would free them from the Romans, their oppressors. They had seen this messiah in Jesus. They had followed him. Then everything collapsed. Evil seemed to prevail. No political messiah, only blood, only the death of Jesus on a cross, the one in whom they had put all their trust. There was no future. They were sad, devastated, because they loved Jesus and felt deeply loved by Him. God seemed to be absent in their suffering. It was at that moment that Christ joined them, at the heart of their pain, their wounds, and their despair. He listened to them with attention, with tenderness. Then He spoke to them. He made them see their distress, their pain, and the events they were going through, through the light of the

Word of God. He thus shared with them the God's vision... and the God's ways, which are not always ours ways. Yet listening to Him, their hearts burned. By hearing the words of the one who had joined them, they felt in them the strength, and the love that Jesus had given them.

The same thing is happening in us today. In the midst of our sufferings, our questions, our darkness, when we hear the Word of God, there arises a sentence, an element which comes to touch us deeply and which gives us hope. We then can see the events experienced through the eyes of God. Everything takes on a different meaning. It is then that we feel the presence of God at our side, a God who supports us, who stands by us and makes us move forward.

When the disciples of Emmaus felt the warmth of love within them, they no longer wanted to be separated from this fellow traveler and invited him to stay with them, *"Stay with us because evening is drawing near and already the day drops"*. You know, when you feel loved by someone, you want to stay in their presence. This is completely normal. Then, at the breaking and blessing of the bread, they recognized him. Their eyes, the eyes of faith, were opened to this new presence of Christ in their midst, a very real but spiritual presence. This is what we live as Christians at each Eucharist. Christ is indeed there, giving himself to us as nourishment, present in his Word, and in the breaking and the blessing of the bread, which is His broken body. It is only with the eyes of faith, the eyes of love, that we recognize his presence in our midst.

After meeting the risen Christ, the disciples of Emmaus changed their path. From a path of sadness and discouragement, they quickly turned around and set off again for Jerusalem, running with joy to announce the good news to others, to testify to them of having met the risen One. With the same enthusiasm, Saint Peter the Apostle was also transformed after having met the risen Christ, as evidenced by the first two readings. He went from a life riddled with remorse from denial and fear to a public life where he openly testified, with force and vigor, of the resurrection of Christ.

This morning, with the conviction and enthusiasm of Saint Peter, and following the footsteps of the disciples of Emmaus, let us set out on new paths by proclaiming to our brothers and sisters: "Yes, Christ is truly risen; he is with me through his Word and by the breaking of the bread at the Eucharist. He is my traveling companion and He shares my life. Thanks to Him, paths of joy and hope open within my heart, a heart that is always burning with His presence. " Amen