

Luke 24: 36-48

36 While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate in their presence. 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, 46 and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things.

The journey continues. We are riding in a Fiat of Faith ... knowing that we are the family of God.

The road signs of Lent, which have been featured over the last several weeks, are signs of warning, signs of information, that convey information for us to think about related to our faith.

The Christian life is a one-way journey, that one way is to life the way of Jesus.

There is road narrowing ... on occasion, we must slow down and choose the narrow (sometimes harrowing) narrow path of righteousness.

There are times when we must stop. Stop and consider whether we are at a cross road ... and we are tempted to turn the wrong way.

Some time we see a "Dead End" sign, and we know that death is not the end, but rather the beginning.

Today, we welcome another member into our family. By Baptism, Quinn Noel Rivas will join us in the Fiat. She will be born again, into the spirit of God.

By Baptism, she comes into our community. In community, she is freed from the isolation that sin creates. But what is sin in light of Baptism and the resurrection? Sin is characterized in these readings, first of all, as ignorance or as "not knowing."

Romans 6:4-6 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

4 Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.

The people rejected and killed the Author of Life. They did not see nor did they recognize the Messiah in the person of Jesus. Sin is again defined as self-focused attention rather than outward reflection. Sin is self-centeredness, centered upon one's own definitions of what life is, what meaning is.

Psalm 4 describes this self-centeredness in powerful terms: we love illusions and seek after lies. The illusions and lies cloud a person's vision so that they no longer see the good that God is doing. God's



goodness and the way it manifests itself go beyond our expectations. It is far greater than the things we might define as good, such as food and wine.

The psalm indicates a way into recognizing something of God's goodness: through prayer. Prayer is, surprisingly, often speaking in silence. Again, the believer is confronted with the unexpected. Sin avoids the unexpected, the surprise, but prayer, as a paradoxical activity (as speaking without speech), will strip away our expectations to discover that God alone gives us joy.

The community of the Baptized, in which God's goodness is known, pulls us out of the so-called normal. This community is known through sharing both spiritual and material gifts. This community is always a community rooted in Jesus Christ. The ultimate communion is the communion with Jesus Christ, who comes with a whole company of saints! Now we know ourselves as children of God (family/community), but we are on a journey of faith in which we are being conformed to Jesus (1 John 3).

This journey is marked by repentance. Repentance and forgiveness of sins are gifts given by the risen Jesus. This repentance is not, a confession and absolution nor is it a magical word **but** a way of life defined by baptism, where the resurrected life begins for every believer.

This Baptized way of life consists in living out the constructive affirmations of the ten commandments as Luther describes them in the Small and Large Catechisms.

When a child is first born, we gaze down upon them, joyful at their safe arrival, disbelieving that this tiny human is really your son or daughter, and wondering how on earth we would know how to take care of such a tiny life. While in our joy of disbelief and still wondering, the nurse says, "She needs something to eat." Food! Yes, food was so ordinary, so basic, something we can do for this tiny new life!

Life is so full of moments like this, isn't it? Moments of being overwhelmed by emotion, only to be snapped back into reality by some very basic, even mundane task.

A retired pastor told me once that whenever he arrived at a grieving person's house, where emotions were running so high, the first thing he did was ask for a glass of water. It was something concrete, something the grieving family could do, to keep them grounded. There are times we really need this!

Emotions can be so hard to dissect. I remember when I did my clinical pastoral education internship, our supervisor started each session with a check-in, in which we had to name our core emotion that day: mad, glad, sad, or afraid.

Every emotion, he insisted, could be boiled down to these four.

How are you feeling right now? You who are Baptized. What could someone raised from the dead possibly have to do with how you are feeling right now, as we try to navigate this complex life?

Does this Gospel help you relate to the disciples?

Those disciples who are truly emotional beings— "While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering," What a mix! Seeing their complex stew of emotions right there in the Bible affirms for us that it is okay to be such emotional beings.

Then enters God's Grace

True grace is seeing that when we are at our most human, when emotions seem to overwhelm, Jesus comes to us.

He comes to us with words of peace. He comes to us with concrete requests, like, "You guys got anything to eat around here?" He comes to us and invites us to touch, to see, to experience him with our five senses, in the most normal way possible. He comes to us with what I envision is a twinkle in his eye, eager as he is to share the news that this is for real, that he is for real, that he has indeed defeated those things that cause us such turmoil in life. Not only that, but he has taken that very turmoil and brought out of it the promise of new and everlasting life—just as he said he would.



We as a church continue to embrace Jesus' earthiness and his willingness to come to us in ordinary things: the smell of bread baking, the taste of wine on the tongue, the sprinkle of water (Baptism) on a brow, the sight of the gathered assembly, the sound of song, and the Word proclaimed. The journey on earth.

This presence makes sense out of the chaos that is our human lives. It allows us to see these post resurrection appearances as appearances Christ has made in our own mundane lives. It indeed causes us to "see what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God." Thanks be to God that "that is what we are" (1 John 3:1).



