

4/23/2023. 3rd Sunday of Easter -A

Acts 2: 14, 22-23/ 1 Peter 1:17-21/ Luke 24: 13-35

Even if we don't use the Internet, we know more or less what it is. And for some people, the first level on the modern human needs is no longer food-clothing-shelter, it has become Wi-Fi-Internet-mobile phone (with data plan). But lately, the Internet has encountered some serious problems. The latest one was a problem with a popular browser and the danger was that personal information like passwords could be stolen. So, for Internet users, passwords are important and it is a good practice to change passwords after a while. But passwords can be quite irritating especially when we forget the latest password that we had used to log in.

One grandmother was telling another grandmother that it was so difficult to remember passwords and she always got it wrong or mixed up. The other grandmother said: Oh, I only have one password for everything and that is "incorrect". Because whenever the computer ask me for the password, I will just type something and then the computer will say: The password is incorrect, and so I will just type "incorrect" and I will get through.

Yes, forgetting the password can be very troublesome and inconvenient and distressing. If we have this unfortunate experience before, then we might understand how the two disciples felt as they made their way to Emmaus from Jerusalem. They had pinned their hopes on Jesus. Then everything crumbled when Jesus was crucified. Then they heard He was alive.

With all this happening, their frustration was that they couldn't understand what was going on. It was like they were locked out of the system and they didn't have the password to get in. So they gave up, frustration turned into disappointment and hence they walked away from it all. From Jerusalem to Emmaus was only seven miles, but walking with disappointment and frustration only makes the journey seem longer and more difficult. Then Jesus came along and walked by their side, but as the gospel tells us, something prevented them from recognizing Him.

Again, it seems like they don't have that password to recognize Him. Well, they did talk with Jesus, telling Him their disappointments and frustrations, and what they got in return was a ticking-off (You foolish men!) and a lesson on Scripture. Still, they did not quite get it until when they were at table and Jesus broke bread and then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Finally, they got it and understood. It was like at the breaking of bread

that Jesus gave them the password to get into the system. The Emmaus incident described in today's Gospel shows us a God who will not abandon us when we are hurt and disappointed. The message of today's Scripture readings is that the followers of Jesus are to maintain contact with their Risen Lord through prayer, the Eucharist, and the Bible.

Verses 25 to 27: Jesus listens in respectful silence. Jesus' long silence bears rich fruit. How fully in tune with the experience of the disciples, he takes up the dialogue, showing that the teaching of the scriptures is not complete until it is experienced in the reality of their lives. As he teaches, what had seemed senseless to the disciples now appears not only meaningful, but in accordance with age-old laws of life. Verses 28 to 32: What Jesus taught them on the road now becomes a reality in the context of a community meal. Verses 33 to 35: This is a crucial part of the story: as a result of the encounter with Jesus and the wisdom they have gained, the disciples are able to return to their community with a new heart.

So now, what is this so-called "password" that Jesus gave to them? The breaking of bread is what we do at Mass. We listen to the Scriptures and we break bread for communion that is called the Eucharist. Eucharist means "thanksgiving". And that is precisely the password that we need to have in order to understand what is happening in our lives and to see Jesus in the midst of this terrific Coronavirus crisis. Well, we did and do talk with Jesus, telling Him our disappointments and frustrations especially at this current situation and what we get in return is a ticking-off. Still, we do not quite get it until when we all can come together as one family at this table and participate at Jesus breaking the bread and then our eyes will be opened and we can recognize Him. Finally, we get it and understood. Because the Eucharistic celebration as one parish family is the password to get into the system. And with thanksgiving in our hearts, we will find hope in disappointment, we will find consolation in our frustration, we will find strength in our faith journey especially at this current situation.

So, as we participate in Mass we need to have that one thing that is necessary, that so-called password, and that is "thanksgiving" and hope. We come to give thanks to God for His blessings that we are safe so far, and we go forth with even greater thanksgiving because we can have the greatest blessing from God, and that is Jesus the Risen Lord. Yes, all we need is thanksgiving and we will understand, we will see and our hearts will be set on fire. **Amen.**