

April 23, 2023



Center for Spiritual Development

Daily Reflections

JOURNEYING THROUGH EASTER

Photo by Tomas Williams from Pexels

GLANCING GRACES

By Julie Mussché

Excerpts from Today's Gospel

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group,

however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

LUKE 24:13-24, 28-35

Reflection

Today is the anniversary of my mom's passing; the events of that day forty-two years ago are imprinted on my heart. Her death was kind of unexpected and sudden, eight weeks from diagnosis. The treatments for stage four lung cancer at that time were brutal and limited. While I had thought I was prepared for her passing—after all I had researched her illness and the dying process during the intervening weeks—I was sucker punched when she exited this world. Losing the most significant person in my life, I entered grief in shock, disoriented and detached and sitting in deep sorrow. This journey of loss and healing, while painful and disconcerting, changed the trajectory of my life.

I have to imagine that Cleopas and his companion were experiencing some form of shock after knowing that Jesus had been brutally executed. Along with his death went the hopes and promises of the Messiah who would free the people of Israel from bondage. And then, the news of his missing body, and spotting of angels at the tomb, surely all of this must have been very confusing. We know from the scripture passage that both companions on the journey to Emmaus were downcast. So it is not hard to understand why, given everything that had happened and was occupying their psyches, they might have not been present to Jesus' being with them along the way. In the moment of awareness in the breaking of the bread, although fleeting, they were struck by Grace, and

from that moment forward, everything was different. So much so, they return from where they began to reaffirm Peter's witness and the miracle of the Resurrection.

Ah, the joys and travails of being human. How often do we miss the immediate opportunities of God passing through, or perhaps catch a glancing glimpse of the Sacred entering our lives? One might be distracted by business, hardships, worries, frivolities or exhaustion, life can be complicated and challenging sometime. In the scripture portion offered today, the awareness of Jesus' presence occurs in the familiar and simple table practice of breaking bread. It is communal and the soul preparation is underlain by the conversation and reflection on the loss and mystery of Jesus' Resurrection. There is the mystery of movements of Grace—this seems like something to hold on to.



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For Pondering

- What are some moments where you have caught a passing glance of the Sacred?
- How do you hold those times in your heart?
- What would you like to share with God in thanksgiving for these

moments of Grace?

Hallelujah! Amen!

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