

## 20140504ThirdofEasterSermon Let's Go for a Walk:

Easter is about movement: in fact, bodily movement. Resurrection moved the physical cells as well as the soul of Jesus, and the cells and souls of his followers. It wasn't just Jesus' soul that rose again, it was a bodily resurrection. Resurrection still gets us out of our comfort zones and calls us to a pilgrimage, to the open road, spiritually, ethically, and sometimes physically speaking.

I know a lot of our parishioners love to walk. It is hard to find certain parishioners on a Tuesday or a Wednesday because they are out with their hiking group. When I have the opportunity I like to walk too. Usually when I have no idea what to preach on the following Sunday, I go for a walk along a beach or in a park where I can talk to myself without appearing to be completely mad! While there I spend my walk observing the world around me and my own inner thoughts for next Sunday's sermon. I also often use the time for intercessory prayer and personal meditation. There is a lovely Latin phrase that reflects why many people walk. It says; *solvitur ambulando*, which means "it will be solved in the walking."

A walk and a meal can transform our life, and that's what happened in the encounter of Jesus with two of his earliest followers. Trudging down the road, two utterly confused followers are joined by a third man. Their world has been turned upside down by the events of the past week: celebration, conflict, violence, and death, and now the possibility that their martyred spiritual leader has come back to life. Resurrection is just as unsettling as crucifixion. It doesn't fit into any rational world view, including the theology of resurrection of the first century Jewish people. They could imagine a resurrection of all humanity at the end of history, but not the resurrection of a solitary individual.

So they must have said to them selves, "Let's go for a walk" and they walk the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus, first sharing their common grief, and then entering into a strange conversation with their unexpected companion, who unfolds the story of salvation through resurrection to them. Somehow, they do not recognize their companion as the teacher and healer Jesus. Perhaps, it is part of God's plan allowing them to gently adapt themselves into a new way of seeing; perhaps, it is the highly energy-filled body of their companion that both reveals and conceals Jesus' identity from them.

Confused and grief stricken, the two men nevertheless reach out to the stranger. They invite him to supper, and come to know his identity as the Risen Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Their hospitality leads to a theophany, an encounter with the Risen Jesus, who is known in the simple Eucharistic acts of praying and eating.

Movement and meal lead to revelation ... and then Jesus is gone, vanishing from their sight, but leaving them with warmed hearts, lively spirits, and energy-filled bodies. They are so energized that they walk seven miles **back** to Jerusalem to share their good news that Jesus is risen and on the road.

After breaking the bread, Jesus vanished from their sight. He may have needed to be on the move as well. We in the Western world have traditionally viewed God as unchanging, unmoving and static. But God is not static, imprisoned by yesterday's revelations and the church's creeds and scriptures. It has taken other culturally interpretations of the Doctrine of God, such as those from Africa and the Far East to bring our understanding of God from that of static Being, a noun, to God as alive and on the move, "being" as a verb. God is doing new things and sharing new insights with other pilgrims on the journey.

Do you know that we really don't know where Emmaus is located. Several possibilities have been surfaced. But perhaps vagueness is a virtue. In not localizing Emmaus, we can be open to the possibility that Emmaus is everywhere. Wherever we are on the road and at every mealtime, Jesus comes to us, filled with energy and possibility, and the joy of resurrection. We can have new life, and we can be born again, right now at any venue. So let's keep moving, and chart new adventures, because Jesus walks beside us on the road.

from Ideas in Bruce Epperley's webpage, "Living a holy adventure"