

Easter 3A

From a 1940's film about an orphanage I'm told there's a short scene about little seven year old Joe who went to be examined by the orphanage doctor. When he came back the nun asked, 'What did he say to you? Joe answered, 'He said to me, "What a miserable little specimen you are". And then Joe added, 'But, Sister, I don't think he knew I had made my first Holy Communion'.

You will notice from the Scriptures that a lot of the sightings of the risen Jesus point towards Holy Communion and today's Gospel is no exception. Last Sunday Jesus said to Thomas: "happy are those who have not seen and yet believe". Well, at Mass we don't see Jesus in the flesh but we believe that He is present with us under the form of Bread and wine and he speaks to us through the Scriptures.

You often hear people say: "I believe in God but I don't believe in going to Church". Well, without the Church, for a start there is no Mass. It is primarily through the Mass that we draw close to Our Lord. Jesus would have remained more or less a stranger to the Emmaus disciples if they hadn't invited Him in to dine with them that evening. Notice how the reading says 'He made as if to go on' but they wouldn't take no for an answer – sort of Mrs Doyle types. If we bypass the Mass our nearness to the Risen Lord cannot be assured.

Another reference to the Mass is when Jesus explained the Scriptures to the two disciples. That's precisely what I'm doing now in this Mass. They said: "did not our hearts burn within us when he'd spoken to us on the road". Do we ever feel the Lord is speaking to us personally through the readings or homily? Our souls are nourished no less on the Word of God than on Bread of Life. The two go together.

We all know the body of Jesus was sacrificed and broken on the cross to redeem and save us. Bread and wine are ideal elements to bring

out this sacrificial nature of the Mass. We can't pick bread off trees – the wheat has first to be ground and the grapes need to be crushed before the bread and wine are made. As bread is broken in the Eucharist, our task in this world is to allow our lives to be broken and sacrificed in the service of our brothers and sisters. Only then will we be anywhere near replicating Christ's love for us which we're supposed to do.

The meaning of the word 'mass' is derived from the Latin word 'missa' which means 'to be sent out'. Like the Emmaus disciples we are sent out from the Mass like men and women on a mission. The two disciples couldn't wait to tell the others what had happened to them on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread. As catholic Christians we too should cherish the Mass and share with our non-churchgoing friends what it means to us personally.

Emmaus literally means '*nowhere*'. Archaeologists don't know where the village actually was located. The two disciples are literally going nowhere until their eyes are opened at 'the breaking of Bread'. At Mass our faith in the Risen Lord can be renewed as well.