

GOSPEL MESSAGE

April 23, 2023

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Accompaniment along the Way

Today's gospel is a story of accompaniment. The two disciples are walking along, grief-stricken, trying to make sense of "the things that have taken place . . . in these days" (Luke 24:18), and Jesus simply joins them. He walks alongside them in their grief, he inquires about their questions, he meets them where they are.

That might be the most profound piece of this whole narrative—that Jesus doesn't try to explain to them what has happened, doesn't try to set the record straight, doesn't try to change their hearts or minds. He simply accompanies them on the journey and shoulders their questions and grief together with them.

Isn't this the very work of the church, week in and week out, as we gather for worship? We come alongside each other, meeting one another where we're at, whether that's in deep grief or celebration or apathy or any other emotion under the sun. We show up to see one other. We show up to be seen, to be accompanied along the way.

And when we gather at the table for the breaking of the bread, Jesus makes himself known to us in ways we cannot explain, as he did for those two disciples in that village of Emmaus. He meets us where we're at and then accompanies us on our way, strengthening us to do the same for those we meet out in the world, for those we meet along the way of our own journeys.

What a gift this is in this time and place, when being right is valued above all else, when so many people are in the business of setting the record straight at all costs. What a gift this is to us. What a gift we're invited to be, in this same way, to others.

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