

Fr. Nick Dant's Homily, Saint Matthew Catholic Church, Indianapolis
Third Sunday of Easter, April 17-18, 2021, Cycle B

Our Gospel passage from Luke for this third Sunday of Easter begins: "The two disciples recounted what had taken place on the way, and how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread." The two disciples are the two who met the Risen Lord on the road to Emmaus. They have just rushed back to Jerusalem, full of excitement, telling the other disciples how the Risen One was "made known to them in the breaking of the bread." As a child I was basically taught that Jesus the Risen One is "in" the bread and wine. True enough, the Risen Lord is fully present in the Eucharistic bread and wine we share. But the Risen Lord Jesus is present more than in the bread and wine standing alone. Here the two disciples are describing that they discovered the presence of the Risen Lord in the action of breaking the bread, not in the static presence of the bread. It was precisely while they were breaking the bread that their eyes were opened and they discovered someone sharing their meal whom they hadn't noticed before, namely the Risen Lord Jesus.

Those two disciples are conveying a truth that we modern day Christians so often miss in our modern day celebrations of the Eucharist. This truth that became so obvious as the noses on their faces to those two disciples is rooted in the very words of Consecration we repeat every Sunday after Sunday, and then is conveyed in our action after we pray the Lord's Prayer. Every Sunday at Eucharist the Priest, speaking in the person of Christ, says: "Take this, all of you, and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will be given up for you." Then, over the wine the priest says: "Take this all of you, and drink from it, for this is the chalice of my Blood...which will be poured out for you" ...then the Priest concludes: "Do this in memory of me." Do what? Jesus is challenging us to action - break our bodies and pour out our blood for each other. "As I have loved, so you also should love one another."

Then, after we pray the Lord's Prayer, we symbolize Jesus' words with the Fraction rite- the breaking of the bread! The breaking of the bread by the priest must always take place for there to be a valid Eucharist – no matter whether the priest uses a smaller big host, or the larger one that can be broken into many pieces. What is being said by the action of the breaking is: as this bread is broken for your physical nourishment, Jesus breaks his body that you might have life. The breaking of the bread represents the action of Jesus' life – a life lived in service to others – even to the point of death. With that, the two disciples' eyes were opened, and they recognized the Risen Lord in their midst.

Those two disciples came to recognize that the Risen Lord is present in our lives broken and poured out for others. So, too, should we recognize that the Risen Lord is made real in the breaking of the bread at this altar, and in the breaking of the bread of our lives for others.