

Sermon: Stay with us, Jesus
3 Easter, Year A
Luke 24:13-35

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“Stay with us.”

This gospel passage from Luke is often referred to as “The Road to Emmaus.” It’s still Easter day. Two disciples are on the road, walking to a village called Emmaus and talking to each other about the events of the past few days, when they are joined by a stranger. We know that the stranger is Jesus, but they don’t – at least, not right away. As they proceed to engage him their understanding of who he is changes. After they’ve been with him for a while, they say the words, “Stay with us! For evening is at hand and the day is past.”

Don’t these disciples speak for us, too? Don’t we want to say “*Stay with us, Jesus!*” when we’ve had some brief glimpse of the Divine? In the past couple of weeks, I’ve talked to a number of people who’ve told me of their own glimpses of the Divine over the course of their lives. Sometimes it was through a dream, or a person actually showing up at an important time and then disappearing. Sometimes it’s been through a special gut feeling, that God was present. One person had an heavenly vision in prayer. Some have had that powerful connection through the Eucharistic bread and wine. Others encounter Christ while prayerfully reading Scripture. There are lots of variations on *how* God appeared but all seemed to have one thing in common – that *after* that encounter, they wished that feeling of God’s presence would *remain*, that they could *linger* in the encounter.

Writer John O’Donahue writes, “The human heart longs to dwell. The root of the word “dwelling” includes the notion of lingering or delaying. It holds the recognition of our pilgrim nature namely, the suggestion that it will be possible to linger for a while... We leave our presence on whatever we touch and wherever we dwell. This presence can never be subsequently revoked or wiped away. The aura endures. Presence leaves an imprint on the ether of a place...”¹

Stay with us, Jesus. When the disciples arrived in Emmaus, they invited Jesus in, still not knowing it was him. And he went into the house with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened, they knew he was Jesus. And then...he vanished from their sight! Certainly the disciples yearned for Jesus to remain in their presence. Certainly their hearts were strangely warmed by this encounter. Certainly the disciples longed for Jesus to linger. And the aura of Jesus endured.

What do you long for these days? What are you yearning for? Maybe a return to so-called normalcy, for this pandemic to leave us, a return to health or a good job situation. Maybe you long to be physically present to your friends and family, including your church family? It is good to desire to be together. It’s good to want to break the bread of the sacrament of Holy

¹ O’Donahue, John, *Eternal Echoes*, HarperCollins Publishing, p.237-8.

Eucharist together. Could it even be that God is *in* the longing, that God has *provoked* that desire within us to connect?

Perhaps all our longing comes from one root desire – to be with Jesus? He may be hidden from our eyes, but he is not hidden from our hearts.

Stay with us, sweet Jesus, and help us trust in your presence.
Amen.