



AMERICAN NATIONAL
CATHOLIC CHURCH

EASTER 2012 PASTORAL GREETING
The Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop

“Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going . . . they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.” (Luke 24:27-35)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

In this Easter Day gospel, we read the story of two of Jesus’ disciples on the way to Emmaus, a small village seven miles from Jerusalem. En route, they were discussing all that had just happen to Jesus in Jerusalem, his crucifixion and burial and the incredible rumors that he was alive. As they spoke, Jesus “drew near and walked with them.” In the exchange, Jesus interpreted the scriptures about himself. Yet, Jesus as a fellow traveler remained hidden to them.

As nightfall approached, the two disciples implored their fellow traveler to stay with them. And as the scripture accounts, it was only while they were at table that “their eyes were opened and they recognized him” in the breaking of the bread.

We have in this splendid biblical recount of the first Easter, the pearl of our faith. The Risen Lord remains hidden to these early disciples and I dare say to us his later disciples in a myriad of ways. But like these disciples our eyes are made open in the Eucharist, in the sharing of the Body of Christ. Yet, just as we recognize Christ in the Eucharist, he vanishes from our sight. What does this mean?

The call of the Eucharist – the invitation to eat the Body of Christ is also the call *to become the Body of Christ*. The joy of the empty tomb is the joy of meeting the Lord “along the way” and beholding him in others. The meaning is that we consume the Body of Christ to make present Christ to the world.


We become Christ when, as St. Paul tells us, we “put on the mind of Christ” (Philippines 2:5). To put on the mind of Christ is to have a mind of love. To put on the mind of Christ is to love our enemies, to do good to them, to pray for them. To put on the mind of Christ is to have the mind of peace – the message of Christ in his Resurrection appearances, “peace be with you.”

This is the joy of the Resurrection. This is the fulfillment of the Savior’s promise: “I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). This is the ever-present proclamation to all Christians: *The Kingdom of God, the in-breaking shalom of God, is available now to everyone through Christ.*

So we sing again our Easter Alleluia. We have traveled our Lent journey into the joy of Christ’s victory over division and death. We celebrate the reality of God’s supreme act of love in giving his Son to us as the cause of our joy. And we celebrate Christ’s gathering of creation – every atom and proton both past and future – into the ever-present redemptive moment of the Resurrection.

We are changed so completely by the Eastern morning. It is so wonderful that we must retell the story again and again as we become equally and as often the bread of life from a fellow traveler that leads to an awareness of what are -- fully redeemed sons and daughters of the living God.

The parishioners, seminarians and clergy of the American National Catholic Church join me in sending you the warmest wishes at Easter. As always, you are held tenderly in our prayers.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ George R. Lucey, FCM". The signature is written in dark ink on a white background.

Most Reverend George R. Lucey, FCM
Presiding Bishop