

There is a wonderful sketching I had above my desk for years by Fritz Eichenberg – perhaps you’ve seen it – it is of some people standing in line on a dark early morning or evening. One of the people is an old man with a cane, looking down at his feet, and another is a young woman huddling with a child, another middle-aged man with rather dirty-looking clothes, another man looking very tired and sort of slumped over. About in the middle of the line is a man with a blanket around shoulders and a bright sort of halo emanating from his being as he stands there, waiting with everyone else. The title of the drawing is “Christ on the breadline.”

**“And how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”** How easy it is for *us* to become down and dejected disciples, walking away from Jerusalem, where it all happened, the excitement, the preaching, the healing, the cheering and the jeering – leaving it all behind and giving up. **“We were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel”**, they said. In other words, now we know he’s not. Kind of like Thomas last week. How easy it is for us to fall into hopelessness when we don’t continue to see.

**“In Jesus Christ all is made new!”** But not really, it is a nice idea, but I just don’t see it. All I see are the hungry people standing in line. So many things can steal our hope and we walk away from “Jerusalem” too. Perhaps death can be one of the biggest thieves of hope – especially of someone you love and admire, leaving you with feelings of “how can I go on now?” Walk away from Jerusalem - anything to flee from the despair.

But can you see Hope waiting in line and that one moment in time can never be controlling? Even though the two disciples were walking away from Jerusalem, they were still conversing and debating – and in that sharing Jesus drew near and walked with them – even though they didn’t notice this profound presence “in the bread line”, he was there all along. When we despair, where do we look for God?

In *their* despair Jesus first referred them to the Scriptures – and he captured their imaginations again: **“Stay with us,”** they said.

**Sometimes believing takes time to unfold and we must spend time in the Scriptures to help that unfolding. Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez put it this way: “We never complete our reading of the Bible; we go to it with our questions, but it in turn questions us. We read it, but we are also read by it. It reveals God to us but it also reveals us to ourselves.” When we are in despair, where do we look for God?**

**After Jesus interprets the Scriptures, he turns to community and he *does* stay with the disciples – “*he took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them, with that their eyes were opened.*” Then their hope was fully returned for they no longer were blinded by despair, they realized that he was there along. The Scriptures and Community, Communion. Do we get it? What we do every week is telling: The Scriptures and Community, the Word of God, the Breaking of the Bread. But it can’t only be in this room. For he stands waiting in every place of despair for us to discover him. This One who brings hope, this One who brings life.**

**As we heard in the first reading, “*God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death, because it was impossible for him to be held by it.*” And when the disciples realized it, they set out at once for Jerusalem to tell the good news. How about us? Now it’s our turn.**