

- [Acts 2:14a,36-41](#),
- [Luke 24:13-35](#)
- [Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17](#)

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread:  
Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and  
reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Triune God,  
you call us into relationship  
but you never told us how hard it could be.  
Guide us to be connectors in our fractured communities.  
Provide us with the words to tell our stories  
and the patience to listen to the stories of others.  
Prepare the way for bridges to be built, as we graft together,  
Help us to let the little things go,  
as we focus on loving, forgiving, inviting and accepting.  
Walk with us Lord Jesus. Amen. <sup>i</sup>

My favorite seminary professor had a habit of always being on the  
move. A literal walking encyclopedia of information he was always  
enroute to something. If you needed a conversation with him, he was  
famous for saying – “Sure, Come walk with me.” And then get ready,

his speed was not a walking and wondering pace, rather you jumped onto the treadmill already in a fast speedy pace, moving quickly, getting to the heart of your conversation and halfway to his destination at the same time. You were along for the ride and while moving, accomplishing a small cardio workout alongside of seeking your answer to whatever matter needed theological or practical advice.

No matter who you were, his answer was, “Come walk with me.”

Our gospel reading today is one of my favorite stories for several reasons, first- there is food involved. I am always hungry for a good feeding story and secondly, this story reminds me that in the midst of our mess, God is faithful amidst our wonder and our own blindness.

Today’s gospel is the “rest of the story” of Easter Day and it is a story of movement.

Much like our own second Sunday after Easter, where we might find ourselves remembering the flowers, the music of easter, we are wondering what to do with all that we have experienced. How will Easter Sunday not fade like the flowers, how with the holiness of walking Holy Week stick with us, transform us? We find ourselves much like the disciples on the way of Emmaus. Recalling the events of Holy Week and wondering about all of the questions unresolved, the

events that took place, the empty tomb and now—now what? Life has resumed.

Cleopas and his friend, with and without words, are working out the events they have just experienced. A person comes up beside them and asks them about their story and they say, “Come walk with us.”

And they share their story. Their perspective, their joy and their shock. Their hopes and what they had hoped. Openly they pour their hearts out in the aftermath of this unexpected death in their lives.

And the stranger listens, receives, embraces them where they are. The stranger walks alongside of Cleopas and his friend, invited in fully.

And then they listen to the person they invited into their walk. Listened to this stranger who reminded them of the bigger story, the teachings they knew by heart and could not remember because of their pain, shock, their grief.

Without judgement, the stranger reminds them of the familiar, the endurance, the transformation that has been constant throughout all of creation and the reminder that in each of those moments, God interrupted the expected and transformed expectations.

Cleopas and his companion receive the stranger’s story with wonder. They listen with their hearts, fully receiving this alternate view of their

despair and they want more. They want their walk to continue and recognizing a desire to also stop to eat and rest for the night, they invite this stranger in for a meal together.

After a long day of confusion, walking and wondering, they also crave to sit, share a meal- the most common and intimate of things- together. To listen and be with each other a little bit longer, to know more.

And it is there that these two disciples/followers of Jesus “get it.” They literally see the face of Christ in the stranger because that is exactly who he is in his resurrected form. Right there, on their walk, at their table, reminding them of that last time they were gathered around a table together before. And now After.

After being reminded of what they already knew.

After receiving their story and their grief

After listening

After receiving

Acknowledgement and Transformation.

Come walk with me and be transformed. It’s a walk that will leave you changed. Remember Jacob? Wrestling with the Angel? After his experience he not only got a new name, his walk was never the same.

Cleopas and his friend, would never walk that road the same way again, I wonder if they wondered if they would run into Jesus again on their walks that would take them near and far?

And the answer is yes.

On each walk we take we encounter the risen Christ, in the most unsuspecting ways. We might not realize it until we have spilled our guts and flooded out all of our emotions and paused to listen to the other, not realizing our misunderstanding, our misinterpretation, our blindness.

Each day we, too, have the opportunity to listen to the stories around us. Be transformed and strive towards understanding one another more fully to be drawn more fully to the fuller understanding of who God is and what God's beloved community looks like.

Last weekend, I lived in the midst of the aura of the Boston Marathon. Running in college, I had classmates who qualified for Boston and made it here to run the race... they filled me with awe and accomplishment. There was awe and wonder.

Living here amongst the building up of the weekend was an experience in and of itself and seeing friends who came to town for the race was also exciting. On Saturday, I cheered a friend on in the 5K and saw

some of you as you ran alongside, too... if you were near the Four Seasons Hotel, you could hear my cowbells..... and after the 5k my friend invited me to join her for the rest of her afternoon.

Come and walk with me. And we ducked into speaker events and running events, listening to story, walking alongside of each other and sharing our own stories, catching up on life. It's amazing how the running world and the church worlds echo each other. They both have rivalries, competition, invitation and both worlds stem from a deep hunger to be understood and to belong.

In both the church and running, it is clear that invitation does not always mean welcome.

The Boston Marathon has a long, interesting history and has a lot of work to do to continue to celebrate each runner fully and equally. From the exclusion of women and people of color to the discrimination with cheering fans at this past week's race.<sup>ii</sup>

We live in a world where action is our first impulse rather than listening more deeply.

Fear overwhelms us amidst the stranger. Where is the anonymous trust that Cleopas and his companions had for each other?<sup>iii</sup>

Where is the world where we invite the stranger to “Come walk with us” and where we listen deeply to each other? Where is it that desire to understand and come alongside of one another?

I think that world begins with each of us. We each have the opportunity to invite someone to walk or have coffee, to break bread together, to share a cuppa coffee together, to better know each other, to listen without interruption and to be transformed by those conversations- recognizing the belovedness of God in each person that we encounter.

Lord, be known to us in the breaking of bread, open our eyes to see you in all that we do. Help us to transform this world one step at a time. Feed our hearts with your bread of hope and life rather than fear and anxiety.

Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Page 272 What Were You Arguing About Along the Way?: Gospel Reflections for Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter by **Pat Bennett** (Author), **Padraig O Tuama**

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/04/19/metro/boston-marathon-running-diversity/>

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iii [https://the.ink/p/kaylin-ralph-and-the-death-of-anonymous?utm\\_source=direct&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web&fbclid=IwAR2EzGxz-wezEZkTT7l6ilLyld3g-fnermEVATyBUUI75jrwoEz\\_czk3uW4](https://the.ink/p/kaylin-ralph-and-the-death-of-anonymous?utm_source=direct&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&fbclid=IwAR2EzGxz-wezEZkTT7l6ilLyld3g-fnermEVATyBUUI75jrwoEz_czk3uW4)