

Do you recognize the risen Lord?

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Easter brings with it an abundance of natural joy and reason for celebration. The love of God poured out for us through the Incarnation, the life, the death and now the resurrection, which today we commemorate, of Jesus of Nazareth is made known in the most powerful ways. The resurrection is a focal point of our faith, without which the crucifixion would have no more meaning than the another innocent man executed by the state. The Incarnation, the entering of God into the world as one like us, which we commemorate at Christmas, is another focal point — a calling to mind God’s humility and care for us. So much does God love us that God entered our world as one like us. Now that is love!

One of the things that the Scripture has called my attention to this Easter is the number of ways the friends and disciples of Jesus do and do not recognize the risen Lord. Have you ever noticed that? Why is it that? What were they expecting to see? What are *we* expecting to see?

The message from God — sent by, literally, “messengers from God” — is “Do not be afraid” (Matt 28:5), “Do not be amazed” (Mark 16: 6), “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5) and “Why are you weeping?” (John 20:13). There is, at first glance, a lot of confusion and the need for a messenger from God to begin to clarify the situation, reset the context, for it had only been a few days since the Lord was crucified. He was supposed to be dead, or so they thought.

What do we think? What do we expect? What do God’s messengers, God’s mediators need to say to us?

I stood at before the crowd yesterday in New York City and, during one of my seven reflections on the last words of Christ, mentioned that the Good News according to Luke is my favorite of the Gospels. One of

the myriad reasons for this is the way the text ends. The account of the walk to Emmaus is by far one of the most powerful stories in all of the New Testament.

It is a story of the confusion of human expectations, we clearly do not know what is going on sometimes. What at first seems like a tragedy, like an end — a crucifixion perhaps — suddenly becomes a sign from God and a confirmation of Kingdom that the Risen Lord preached in his words and demonstrated with his deeds. Yet, how do we come to recognize the Risen Lord?

This Easter, this is my reflection: How do I recognize the Risen Lord? In the breaking of the bread? In the sharing of the Good News? In the entering into relationship with another? How is it that the disciples and friends of the Lord came to recognize him?

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