

3rd Sunday of Easter 2011
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What a week it has been! The Royal Wedding, with its story-book, fairy-tale, happily ever after images of a future king and queen witnessing their vows with billions of people around the world watching with cheers and applause for the royal couple as they made their way through the streets of London.

The beatification of Pope John Paul II, with its witness to the blessedness of one man who challenged the world to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ as more urgent for human freedom and world peace than ever before with a million and a half people gathered in hushed silence and explosions of joyful shouts and applause.

The killing of Osama Bin Laden, which captured the world's attention with its reminders of the terrible crimes against humanity planned by one man and executed by others at the cost of countless lives and with all the questions it raises about human justice and human vengeance.

What a week it has been!

As I look back on the week that was, really a little more than a week, I'm thinking again of the words that have been at the heart of my prayer and preaching since Lent began. Blessed and Broken. We live in a world that is both blessed and broken. Even in the midst of the blessings of love and marriage were the reminders of the brokenness of family relationships. Even in the midst of the great blessings of the beatification of John Paul were the reminders of the brokenness and fragmentation of the Church because of the abuse crisis. And the killing of Osama Bin Laden, only the reminders of the terrible brokenness of a world that is caught in a cycle of violence that appears without end where hatred, and vengeance and powers of sin and death rule.

With all the "things that have taken place" that have garnered the world's attention, what could this story of only two people walking along a dusty road from Jerusalem to Emmaus have to say to us who live in a world where two million people can text and tweet in seconds about the "things that have taken place"?

“Are you the only one who doesn’t know the things that have taken place in Jerusalem these past days?”, the disciples ask the stranger on the road. They begin to tell him what a week it has been. Perhaps they began with the joyful shouts and acclamations of “Hosanna”, Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem one week earlier, the sudden turn of events, his arrest, trial and execution on a the cross and the subsequent stories of seeing him again, alive. What a week it was for these two disciples who had hoped that Jesus the Nazarene would be the one to redeem Israel. They looked back at Jerusalem and were overwhelmed with sadness, disappointment, confusion and perhaps some despair. Oh well, life goes on.

These short-sighted disciples could not see the Risen one right before their eyes. Nor could they possibly know that God’s design was about so much more than “redeeming Israel. They did not realize that they were truly blessed, because of the One who was walking with them for all they could feel was their shattered hopes and dreams.

Until Jesus open their ears to understand the scriptures in a new way. Until Jesus joins them at the table and their eyes are opened. Until Jesus blesses and breaks the bread. Jesus is their blessing. Jesus, the one whose body was broken and blood poured out on the Cross, Jesus is with them. Again. And they recognize him. Their hearts are burning within them. Jesus is present to them in a new way. Now they can look back at the events of the previous week with understanding but also look forward with renewed mind and heart. Their words “we had hoped” are transformed into “We have seen the Lord”.

And what about us who live in this blessed and broken world. How does the Risen Jesus console us, challenge us, nourish us now as he did for those disciples on the Road? One of the things that is worth noting is how during the life of Jesus he invites men and women to follow him to walk with him, to journey with him, ultimately to Jerusalem and his death on a cross. But note that after his Resurrection, he is the one who is walking with his disciples. He is the one who accompanies them. He is the one who can be seen and known as Lord as he is with them.

And how will your eyes be opened? How will you trust that the Risen Lord walks your road? Will you trust that the Risen Lord is here, for us? Will your eyes be opened in the breaking of the bread?