

April 26, 2020 – Third Sunday of Easter – Cycle A
Father Larry Richards

Good Morning! And how are you? Blessed.

Even in the midst of all of this stuff, we are blessed, because Jesus is with us. Some of you feel like he's left you. Oh, he's never left you...never. We just don't recognize him half of the time. Like the apostles, or the disciples...they didn't recognize him, when he walked with them on the road. Now, I spoke about this gospel a few weeks ago. And, we talked about the reality, as a reminder, for those of you who weren't here, we talked about the first thing that Jesus does here, in the gospel of Luke, at the Resurrection, is He says Mass. The whole story here is about the Mass, right? It begins with Jesus speaking to them, and opening up the scriptures, the Old Testament, and then explaining that to them. That is the Liturgy of the Word. And then, that's not enough, because no matter how powerful a speaker may be....here's Jesus, speaking, giving the homily, and it's not enough. And so they said, stay with us. And he sits down, and what does He do? He says the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It says very clearly....while he was at table, he took bread, and said the blessing, and broke it and gave it to them. That's Eucharist....that's what we are going to do here in a second. And with that, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

Jesus reveals to us his presence most clearly in the Eucharist. But, though they recognized him, finally in the Eucharist, he was still with them, even when he had not yet brought forth the Eucharist, correct? You know, here they were walking and as they were walking, and it says "Jesus himself drew near to them and walked with them", and they didn't recognize him. They didn't recognize his presence. But he was with them. Sometimes we don't recognize His presence. We feel lost. But He is with us, we never walk alone. If you follow me on Twitter or Facebook or one of those things, you know every morning and every night I put out a tweet or a facebook – I put out a scripture every morning and every night. So last night the scripture I put out was from James chapter 4, verse 8, and it says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you." During this time is when we can truly spend time with God. You know, it's been, I miss, especially those of you who I see, my parishioners, who I have Mass with on Sunday. It's just the strangest thing to be a priest without a congregation. And as Pope Francis said last week, "this is not the way of the Church. This isn't the future of the Church". We are just yearning for the time when we can come back and receive Jesus in the Eucharist and be with one another, because that's part of what the Body of Christ is. We are together. So, we have to do it spiritually now, but hopefully, in the next couple of weeks, praise God, maybe, we can come back together. And so then we can receive Him in his true Body and Blood, and then we come to recognize Him. But I want to encourage you to recognize him now. Recognize his presence in your life now. That's what I've had to do. Every morning when I wake up and I'm just with Jesus, I know that I'm never alone. You are never alone. Don't feel far from Him. He's not far from you. This whole thing is about Jesus being with us. He drew near to them, walked with them, they said stay with us, he stayed with them. When you and I draw near to Jesus, He stays with us. We need to recognize Him now, more than ever. So I encourage you, in your prayer, and hopefully you are praying, and not just when you show up here for Mass online or something, that you in this time you are taking time to be with the Lord. And, I often have said to people, throughout the years, don't leave your prayer until you've touched the throne. What does that mean? Don't leave your prayer until you've known that you had an encounter, where you recognize that Jesus is with you. Again, too many people just say a bunch of prayers. They say the same prayers every day, they do the same thing, and they say, I don't feel God...I'm just going through the motions. Well, stop. Sit there until you do. Don't just say something. Don't just

say some prayers....spend some time with Him in the Word. Just draw near to him and become aware that he is very near to you. People, he lives inside of you. That's what we believe. Is that what you believe? That you're never alone. That Jesus Christ is truly present inside of you, since the day you got baptized. When you know that, and you know that are never alone, you are going to yearn for him even more in the Eucharist. You are going to yearn for that unity. But you are going to know that he has never failed you, no matter what. He is with you, he is with us, he never leaves us.

May each of you know His love, today and forever, Amen.