

### Easter III Year C

“Now none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you, because they knew it was the Lord.”

We've just returned home from Austin Texas visiting our three children...One of the latest very cool things in Austin...among many cool things in Austin...is the proliferation of food trailers...street vendors just all over the city...old, rejuvenated Airstream trailers modified into kitchens with walk up windows...improvised flat beds housing smoldering barbecue pits...Old ice cream trucks and equipment trailers turned bistro serving roasted duck breast on grilled focaccia style bread with fresh mixed greens and balsamic vinaigrette...but I digress....slow food to the max...all over town...one such place entitled “man bites dog”....which of course serves bratwurst with sauerkraut and spicy mustard...And then myriad street vendors selling all manner of tacos....Our sons' favorite is a place called Taco Rico which is on the southeast side of town in an Hispanic working class neighborhood... far from the trendy roast duck sorts of places....It is a family business in the parking lot next to a self service Laundromat...the tacos, made with homemade tortillas, are a dollar and a half apiece...none of the proprietors speak English, nor do most of the folks in the neighborhood, so our son James, who has picked up pretty much fluent Spanish by working in kitchens was our translator....we ordered...or he ordered...and no sooner than we had placed it...this woman sitting at the only table in the parking lot with a small child...invited us, in reasonably good English, to join her at the table...It wasn't like we asked if she minded...she genuinely invited us...so we joined her in this remarkable feast of Al Pastor and Barbacoa tacos, food, no less, of the gods...and Mexican Coca-colas made with real cane syrup, not the synthetic corn stuff... the way cokes used to be made when I was young...wistful memory flooding into the moment....and soon we were told about her family trips to Mexico City...the time they were detained by armed police in the countryside....she told us about her husband....about her son, J.R. who she said could fix anything having to do with an automobile...We told her about where we come from, how we ended up in Austin...James said something to her in Spanish and she laughed out loud...she told us about her meager home just down the rusty vehicle bestrewn bumpy street...but she owned it outright she said with pride... “It's paid for,” she exclaimed...She told us her name was Margie, the little girl, Dana, and we all introduced ourselves in this found warmth of human community...was this meal now?... or a memory? or both?...we departed with hugs there in this parking lot in a lost corner of the city....a lost corner turned holy ground.

We all agreed that these were the best tacos in town...a rarity that we would all agree....and James remarked that there was something more...that this moment was the way life really is...the way life is meant to be....moments of invitation and welcome and hospitality along the way in loving simplicity...and loving exchange....a meal wonderfully shared...the moment aglow, and glows still with the quite natural light of heaven.

I want to name this resurrection life....resurrection real, resurrection natural and alive among us....resurrection not fantasy, but reality....resurrection:... “found warmth” in the human community....not an ancient magic act, nor something supernatural that is unattainable because of its otherworldliness...but resurrection life real and alive wherein we live in a shared intimacy with each other as equals...a manner of life wherein the word

“family” gets broadened so that we recognize that we are all of God’s household living in an intimate recognition of the humanity shared by each of us...and not just intimacy....but abundance as well...not excess, this abundance, but a sustainable and gracious adequacy...and without fear....In last weeks gospel reading Jesus tells his disciples to be at peace....to fear not....and when we live in the household of God fear is indeed banished, because we stand together as the invited and the empowered and the worthy... in a solidarity against which fear cannot stand...and that, brothers and sisters, is no less than thrilling.

Our Gospel text for today is considered by most commentators an appendix to the original version of John’s Gospel...for example, there are a number of words that appear here in this chapter of John, but no where else in this Gospel; the syntax is different...and then there’s the peculiar part of the narrative where the disciples don’t recognize the risen Jesus...one would think having been around him every day for a number of years, the disciples certainly would have recognized him...so something else is going on here....this I think is a narrative commentary that is interpreting what has come before....so it is not meant as a literal account of Jesus’ days on earth, post resurrection...but it is meant as a theological interpretation as to what has come before in this gospel text; a summary in the mind of the scribe of the meaning of John’s Gospel.

So what is this scribe trying to tell us? First, that to follow the teachings of Jesus, there follows a life of sustainable abundance. After having no luck fishing the night before, the disciples are instructed by Jesus to cast their nets on the right side of the boat, and we are told that their nets are filled...This is a commentary on mission...that to live lives of compassion and mercy and healing...lives bearing justice and forgiveness...lives of invitation and welcome...what the figure of Jesus models for us...that the nets will teem with the lost who have been found...found by the warmth of community....To live as children of God, the sent ones, the raised ones, is to draw the world to God’s gracious and abundant commonweal wherein all stand with self worth, raised status and new hope....all synonyms for dignity...dignity, the very heart of salvation.....And we are taught that to follow Christ, we must love this sacred way above all things, because this sacred way is all things....this way of the Christ for which we were born, for which we were made.... and to follow is to quite simply feed and tend and heal each other...love simple and profound, not a complicated improbable dogma...but love quite simply on the street....

And then there’s the meal: Most of the resurrection appearances take place in the context of a meal...the walk to Emmaus in Luke in which the disciples recognize Jesus only after bread is broken...and here a grilled fish meal...Palestinian street food...a meal wherein Jesus is recognized because he is host, and hosts quite literally give life...the Christ recognized amid invitation and welcome and a shared meal....and where there is life there we recognize the raised Christ,

So I think at the heart of this passage we are being taught the art of recognition...In fact, the life of faith is at its heart the practice of recognition...and that requires our paying attention...the art of recognizing the raised Christ among us...the recognition of life among us...the recognition of something we’ve known all along... found warmth amid the fabric of our ordinary lives....on street level....to recognize the found warmth of human community is to see the reality of resurrection....see it!?...and the good

news for us here is that to follow in this way...the net doesn't break but holds...that following in the way will never be in vain...that the net will not break under the weight of such work nor under the weight of such heavenly abundance...I have thought for some time now that it is not death we fear, but that truly being alive is what we fear most...and know this, the resurrection invitation is first and foremost to live without fear!

And it is this way, this journey along the proverbial southeast sides of town...along the forgotten places...even along familiar places long forgotten...this way will surprise...sometimes a detour not our choosing...but along this marvelous way it is for us to recognize the risen Christ among us...to recognize the host who invites us into family...into her life...into a meal found in the warmth of the now, a meal familiar in memory, a past and future meal remembered...invited into the very beauty of the way the world is made...a world raised to a common, but rich dignity...that tastes of heaven...resurrection a simple, natural part of the order...not the complicated, synthetic stuff...but the real and the true and the good forever being raised up among us...like that meal we had together...remember? The host invites us to gracious table along the lost streets and the lonesome lakes, and even in our very homes, invites us into the warmth of truly being human....

Dear raised ones, may we have the good sense and the polite courage to accept the invitation...and we dare not ask who this host is, this host who is preparing the food of the gods in our very presence, in our own day...we don't ask who this host is because we know, don't we? It is the Lord! The Lord risen indeed!