

3rd Sunday of Easter Year A
May 8, 2011
St. Luke Sheboygan Falls
Luke 24:13-35

Here All Along

Let us pray. In tragic times it becomes so easy to assume that you have forgotten about us and that you don't care about us. Thank you for the frequent reminders of saving water and bread and wine, that you are always with us. AMEN.

Like many of you, I was blown away by the news of the death of Osama bin laden a week ago. For most of us, the thought of pursuing him and bringing him to justice was deep in the recesses of our minds.

One exception would certainly be those who lost family or close friends in the September 11th attacks. Surely, their loved ones were never far from their thoughts. How often did they wonder if their quest for justice had been forgotten or put on the

back burner by our government and our military?

Tuesday's Milwaukee Journal

Sentinel tells the story of a father who had travelled to New York City after the terrorist attacks in search of his missing daughter. He snapped a picture of a piece of machinery bearing graffiti that read in bold letters:

"BIN LADEN MUST DIE." When he arrived home, he placed that photo on his mantel piece in his home outside West Bend—only to be removed now, after Sunday's news. It had been a long, brutal road.

I can imagine that Jesus' disciples who were walking on the road to Emmaus had similar feelings to that father and to others who have felt bereft by the terrible loss of loved ones. Their teacher and Lord had died, painfully and tragically and then, came this stranger who knew nothing of their grief and devastation.

When the stranger joined them on the way, it gave the disciples the opportunity to share their story and unload their doubts and frustrations. They had no idea that it was Jesus himself who was walking beside them. Just when they felt the most deserted, after the bazaar events of Jesus' death and the empty tomb—Jesus showed up and quietly walked alongside them. In their grief he reassured them of all of the Old Testament prophecies and promises that they had quickly forgotten about.

Yet, the mourning disciples still didn't recognize that Jesus was with them. They invited him to stay with them to be polite to a stranger on the road. It was only when Jesus was at the table with them, took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them that their eyes were opened. The Lord was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

When we think of life as a journey, we may feel like Jesus is nowhere to be seen. I remember when I was a senior in High School my dad, who had walked with crutches for as long as I could recall, stepped into a pothole in a restaurant parking lot and broke his hip. The doctor decided that he needed to be in an open cast, so he was in the hospital for a month or more (that would NEVER HAPPEN TODAY). I have pictures of my boyfriend and me visiting him there before we went to prom and he wasn't able to attend my Graduation ceremony although he was there for the party later.

To my dad, walking was everything. Yet, after that freak accident he was always dependent on his wheelchair to get around and my mom to drive him everywhere.

Now, my dad always seemed to me to have a positive attitude. I never saw his

frustration overtake him, yet, I know there must have been times when where God was on his journey, times when he couldn't see him clearly.

Much like Jesus was with the disciples on the road to Emmaus all along even though they didn't recognize him, he was always with my dad. That's how he was able to keep his faith in God in spite of the potholes that tripped him up. And they weren't small, insignificant bumps on the road—they were truly painful and heartbreaking difficulties he had to face, but he had his family, he had his church in the form of Pastor Conrad who came to give him Communion in the hospital and at home and he had his Lord that he met in the breaking of the bread.

So in those times of your life when you feel forgotten, that even God has deserted you, when the way is long and

bumpy and rough, don't neglect to take time to gather with God's people at the table of healing and grace. For that is where God's love and renewal and the peace that passes understanding can always be found, in the opening of the Scriptures, in the love of his Body and in the breaking of the bread. AMEN.