



May 1, 2011 Jn 20:19-31

Better late than never

Ever feel like you miss out on all the good stuff? Are you the one who always arrives 5 minutes after the big event? You're in good company. Think of the disciples asleep on the Mount of Transfiguration or snoozing in the garden of Gethsemane. Remember the forehead smacking revelation for two weary travelers on the road to Emmaus. Scripture is littered with latecomers, some of whom steal the show.

Like Thomas in this week's reading, He's out when the big revelation in the upper room happens. And it's his natural disbelief at the disciples "tall tale" that teaches us a great lesson about faith. Centuries after that phenomenal Passover week we're latecomers too, faced with the same challenge of believing without seeing. We need that image of Jesus accepting Thomas in his moment of doubt to reassure us in these distant, darker hours. It's the mixed blessing arriving late, but our faith is stranger for it. As the old saying tells us: better late than never.

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May 8, 2011 Lk 24:13-35

Table talk

Want to see your family at their most honest? Come to the dinner table. Alone with family, hungry and tired, people are surprisingly open. Listen closely when sorrows and triumphs are aired. Are responses supportive or demeaning? Do petty struggles bubble up as we pass the bread? Does faith have a place at the table? It's amazing what we can learn simply by listening to table talk.

In the same way Jesus watched the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Accepted as stranger where He should have been known, Jesus listened. In sharing their meal, the travelers shared their hearts. And the gospel tells us that Jesus "was revealed in the breaking of bread." A phrase, a broken loaf and their hearts were stirred. They heard His table talk and left that communion empowered to share the gospel with all they met. May we pray today to listen faithfully to our table talk and His so that our road to Emmaus will not be with a stranger, but a beloved Lord and Savior.

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May 15, 2011 Jn 10:1-10

Bo knows

You're reading today's gospel and find yet another shepherd reference. Does something inside you yell, hey, I live in a CITY! Who am I Little Bo Peep? Well consider this image. Your family is headed out to dinner. Opening the door you swoop a protective arm around stragglers, *herding* them outside. In the car you steer them to the best *grazing*. Once inside a warm, dry shelter you soothe the *little lambs* until they are peaceful and ready to eat. You keep a wary eye on your *flock* while everyone is fed and then gather them back to the car and home.

Feeling a little sheepish? Probably. We all have a touch of Little Bo Peep, whatever life we lead. We shepherd those God has entrusted to our care, seeing their daily needs are met. And just as our "little lambs" learn to trust and follow an earthly shepherd, we must in turn trust and follow our heavenly Good Shepherd. It's like being Bo Peep and the sheep at the same time. A humbling thought for all of us. Who knows what other lessons we can learn from all this pastoral imagery? Bo knows. And God does too.

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May 22, 2011 Jn 14:1-12

I'll be back

It's a familiar picture: A tiny face pressed anxiously against the windowpane, as a beloved parent heads off into the big, outside world. A mixture of fear, loneliness and jealousy bubbles up at being left behind. Why can't we go with them? Will they be gone a long time? What will we do till they return? And the painful emotions cut both ways. Our parents know they must go away to work, to plan for our future, to protect us. How hard it can be for both sides, this early lesson in trust.

The disciples had a similar tough lesson as Jesus prepared for His Ascension. "If I go," He tells them, "I will come back again and take you to myself." Fearful, the disciples asked for directions, wanting to follow Jesus when He left. But Jesus knew their faith would never flourish if the disciples couldn't endure this separation. He must complete the work of salvation and they must stay behind to build His kingdom. Painful and sometimes scary, this waiting our faith must endure. But oh what joy we will feel when our Father's face appears outside the window to finally call us home.

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