

“Their eyes opened wide and they knew Him!” ~ Midweek Reflection # 45, April 22, 2009

I've been focused this week on three scripture stories, accounts of three encounters with the Risen Christ in Luke/Acts, in preparation for Sunday's sermon on the third Sunday of the Easter season. All three help us understand where we are most likely to encounter the glorified Christ in our lives today. The three stories recount (1) the two disciples encounter with Christ on the road to Emmaus, (2) The gathered community's experience with Christ behind locked doors in Jerusalem later that same night [both from Luke 24 ] and, (3) Peter and John's experience with the cripple at the temple gate in Acts 3. the glorified Christ here ministers through his faithful disciples as they respond to the need of the beggar.

“As we gather as the community of the baptized around Christ's table, and as we stand in unexpected ways among the marginal in society... Christians need to learn to tell faithfully the stories of the One who was wounded for our sakes, that, in the telling of the stories we might be made whole.” ~ William C. Placher, Narratives of a Vulnerable God, Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, (1994), p. 179.

“The community of faith offers the protective boundaries within which we can listen to our deepest longings, not to indulge in morbid introspection, but to find our God to whom they point. In the community of faith we can listen to our feelings of loneliness, to our desires for an embrace or a kiss, to our sexual urges, to our cravings for sympathy, compassion or just a good word; also to our search for insight and to our hope for companionship and friendship. in the community of faith we can listen to these longings and find the courage, not to avoid them or cover them up, but to confront them in order to discern God's presence in their midst. There we can affirm each other in our waiting and also in the realization that in the center of our waiting the first intimacy with God is found. ~ Henri J. M. Nouwen, Reaching Out; The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1966), p. 109. Both of the above quotes are found in Resources for Preaching and Worship Year B, compiled by Hannah Ward and Jennifer Wild

May we know God's presence in the Risen Christ as we journey daily with other disciples, as we break bread together around Christ's table, and as we reach out to those in need. and as we affirm one another in our waiting for intimacy with God.

Under the Mercy,

Howie