

Easter 3 4-18-10 St. Luke's, EG 8 & 10

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

In the name of the Living God, Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Collect today and the lessons for this Third Sunday of Easter are all about being **surprised by the Lord**, and then following the way in which he has led!

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known in the breaking of the bread: SURPRIZE!

Where is that very Easter moment portrayed in our very midst for all to see and ponder every single Sunday?

Right there in Caravaggio's immortal "*Road to Emmaus*" rendered for us by Dr. Soderberg some years ago that has until today hung over there by the baptistry. Now it has a more **prominent** place relevant to **us** up here in the sanctuary, but a little removed from YOU all, because of the new painting to be dedicated later today...but for the moment, we concentrate on the meaning behind this painting and the story it conveys, which is similar to today's gospel as well, another post resurrection appearance of Jesus just as much a surprise.

We call this story affectionately the "breakfast fish" and I always dedicated each time it comes up every three years to Bud Koeniger, Art Drew and every other fisherman who may just encounter Jesus, the Christ in the midst of that beloved pastime that puts them in touch with something of "the eternal" especially when they catch a big one!

But seriously these stories point to the mystery of God being known in Christ in various ways and experiences of our own lives, sometimes here in the sanctuary, but even more dramatically and surprisingly in the supermarket or wherever else we live and move and have our being.

That's where God comes to us and call to us and beckons us to follow:

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

What a powerful hymn we sing to introduce this gospel today (at 10); I just love it:

“Will you love the YOU you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you’ve found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in **you** and you in me?”

That’s in essence what was said to St. Paul when he experienced his conversion on the road recalled in the Acts passage today. Here’s ANOTHER story (the most classic of all) of how God comes to US and we then are called upon to respond.

Our modern day western mind and psychology has us so **center** to everything. Everything begins with US and how WE come to see the world.

But that is not the Biblical view! In the Bible God comes to people FIRST and the people respond:

“Oh, my goodness, Lord; you mean it’s not ME and all my angst (or gifts or skills) that are at the center of the universe? Rather, it’s YOU and your life and love and grace calling me to respond and follow?”

That is the point of the Resurrection: CHRIST LIVES!! And we are called to live in Him and with Him and through Him for this life and the next!

That perspective, that conversion of thought and mind and heart is at the center of the new life promised to you and me this Third Sunday of Easter that brings hope and strength no matter the travails of our lives: the earthquakes, fires, floods, NOW volcanoes, all the horrors inflicted upon humanity, both by nature and our fellow human beings.

In the midst of it all, we are blessed by the presence of Christ calling us each by name: WHAT A SURPRIZE! Just like Paul on the road, or the disciples at the breaking of the bread, or on the beach, or John of the Revelation who looked and heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and elders and what does he hear being sung by thousands??

“Worthy is the Lamb—the very one slain—worthy is HE to receive power, wealth, wisdom, honor, glory and blessing!!” That’s the SAME cry we replicate at every Eucharist when we sing or say in reverence and awe:

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, God of power and might, heaven and earth are FULL of your glory. Hosanna in the highest”

OMG! This is BIG!

We are caught up in the biggest and deepest mystery of creation,

- known to us in the Breaking of the Bread,
- as it was known to Paul on the road, or John in the cave on Patmos,
- or those fisherman at dawn on the beach,
- or to you in your study or kitchen or bathroom or in the car, when you take a moment to pray and are surprised by JOY at the calling of your name,
- or the presence of another deep inside you, or **next to you**,
- or in the brand new face of God in a newly born or adopted baby
- or in a healed daughter after a medical emergency!

Fill in the blanks of **your own life** where YOU are called by the One who knows your name,

- and won't let you go,
- until **you turn and follow**,
- and God's LOVE is therein made manifest once more in the world!

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name, even now,
as we stand to say we believe....