

Reflection on the 3rd Sunday of Easter

The Context

Experiences can overwhelm us, dazzle us. Sometimes experiences change us. But there are those rare experiences that leave us completely flustered. We cannot give the experience a context. The experience does not change what we know or feel. It does not even change the way we live. The strange nature of the experience challenges us to seek a completely new understanding, an entirely different context if you will.

If you have never had such an experience, consider the conversion experiences of your family, friends, or fellow church members. Many of those people had experiences that led them on a life-long journey to faith. They had to find a context to give their experience or their inner yearnings a true home.

The followers of Jesus had such an experience. What they saw, heard, and touched so completely flustered them, the disciples needed the risen Jesus to give them the context for true understanding.

Over the past two weeks, the Sunday gospels have recalled the confusion and fear caused by the Resurrection. They have also echoed Jesus' greeting of Shalom that soothed the emotions of the early followers. This Sunday added a new element to the disciples' vision experience: a context for understanding. This context would sustain the changes the Church would undergo in its first few generations of believers.

We, like most Christians, are tempted to take the context for granted. The Good News might become the old news. To shake off this inclination, let us place ourselves in the company of those who first heard the words of the two from Emmaus. Better yet, let us place ourselves in the company of those who evangelize others by word and deed. Let us walk with those who serve the poor and needy in the name of Christ. Let us walk with those who serve the children or those outsiders who seek Christ. In the mere process of being witness, the context comes alive. For Christ walks with us when we serve others.