

**St Mary Magdalene's Anglican Church
Moore Street, Adelaide**

Reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Easter

THEY RECOGNISED HIM IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

If my mother ever suspected the truth behind whatever I was telling her she'd exclaim: "Someone's telling stories!" There are many kinds of stories. Some are myths, others are legends, and others are plain false in every way while others again are factually true or embellished truth.

The Gospel this morning is a compelling story which one can be confident falls into a category of embellished truth. I think this because St Luke, the writer, is trying to convey a real truth in this story. Most stories contain a truth about something or someone and it is important that we discover this truth and embrace whatever it is. The truth about St Luke is that he is doctor of medicine and an intelligent follower of Christ who has clear writing ability. His aim is to convey the truth about Christ to a largely Gentile readership.

The truth in this story is that Christ is risen and makes himself known in the Breaking of the Bread. It is this truth which has been the foundation of the Catholic understanding of Holy Communion. It is possible to pass in then out, several times over, in one's embrace of Christ's presence in the Sacrament. I have found over the years that my emotional conviction about the Sacrament is seasonal, depending on my frame of mind and the church with which I am associated.

I suppose the most wonderful season of my embrace of the meaning of the Sacrament was when I was the Assistant Priest at Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney. There the music and the ceremonial readily aided one's thoughts and convictions. But there have been other circumstances when I have felt my spine tingle during Mass – several times at St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School masses and several times at St Mary Magdalene's Church over the years. I can also recall occasions which have been very, very simple and quiet when my spine has tingled over Christ's presence.

The setting for worship is crucial for our attention and emotions to be accessible. We all need the space and time to tune our minds and emotions to what is taking place in church. Apart from all this the scriptural words themselves are spine tingling. Every time I hear them or read them it remains a story which I find very moving.

Given the circumstances of Jesus' death and now some news of his resurrection it is unsurprising that the disciples were not immediately receptive to further stories. They were just emerging from being distraught.

How are we to try to apply this account of a resurrection appearance to our daily lives? I think it calls us to value highly the occasions we come to church for the celebration of the Mass. It becomes our regular opportunity to meet the risen Christ. It may not always be spine tingling but the fact of the meeting remains. We can feel encouraged or pleased without necessarily feeling inspired. Holy Communion then can be a launching pad for all kinds of personal goals. Holy Communion with risen Christ can stiffen our resolve to do something or be someone where you are needed.

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