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Meals and food play an important part in the tradition of post-Resurrection stories or narratives found in the gospels.

In one such narrative, for instance, Jesus suddenly appears among the disciples as they are huddled together in Jerusalem. After showing them the wounds on his hands and feet, he abruptly asks them, Have you anything here to eat? The disciples, no doubt dumbfounded that he could be thinking of food at a moment like this, give him a piece of broiled fish and watch him eat. In John's Gospel, on the other hand, Jesus himself prepares a breakfast of fish and bread on the shore as he awaits the disciples return from fishing. Come and have breakfast, he calls out nonchalantly. For someone so recently dead, our Lord certainly seems to have a healthy appetite.

Of course, the point of the stories is not his physical hunger but the reality of his Resurrection. It is really him, the evangelists are telling us not just a ghost or a vision. He can relax and eat with his disciples just as he did before his death. No doubt about it: this is Jesus the same one who taught and preached the kingdom not so long ago; the same one who cured the sick and raised the dead as he journeyed across the countryside. After all, ghosts do not get hungry. Apparitions do not need nourishment. Touch me and see, says Jesus, for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

In today's gospel account, two disciples make their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, passing the time and talking with each other about all that

has happened, including the discovery of Jesus' empty tomb. They are joined on their journey by a seemingly out-of-touch stranger, and they begin to recount to him the things about Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet mighty in deed and word. But it is only later that day at supper in the blessing and breaking of bread that their eyes are opened to this stranger, and they finally recognize in him the Jesus of whom they have been speaking. Then, at the moment of recognition, Jesus disappears from their sight, and the newly energized disciples hasten from their table back to Jerusalem proclaiming, The Lord has risen indeed.

These post-Resurrection meals of Jesus and his disciples hearken us back to the final meal our Lord shares with the disciples before his death the Last Supper in which he gives them, and us, his body and blood as a living token of his abiding presence for all time. In a very real sense, the bread and wine of the Last Supper prefigure Christ's resurrected life among us. The Eucharist still today brings us together with the disciples on the road to Emmaus and allows us to experience the mystical reality of the Resurrection in the simple sharing of a meal. Our earthly eyes are given a glimpse, however fleeting, of the great reality to come the reality of resurrected life without end. And so we proclaim, Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

In the Eucharist, **what has been** is fused with what will be. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is not just history. It is not just some arcane mystery of faith to which we as Christians must give our assent. It is attested and experienced anew in each Eucharist we share. So it should not surprise us that our Lord would have supped with his disciples and broken bread with them in the days following his death and Resurrection. He continues to feed us still. He shares a meal with us today as an

assurance of our portion in his risen life. It is in the Eucharist that we come to know the risen Christ most abundantly.

Medieval theologians make a fine science of explaining the presence of Christ upon the altar in the Eucharist and using complicated philosophical terms such as substance, accident, and transubstantiation to explicate the inexplicable all in an attempt to capture and codify this deepest of mysteries at the centre of our life in Christ. Many later scholars reject their conjectures as so much pedantry. But there can be no mistaking the near-universal belief among Christians of all ages that Christ is somehow alive and well and with us still in the food and drink we share in communion with each other and with him.

And this is exactly the same as saying Christ is risen. In other words, if you seek the resurrected Lord, you need look no further than the altar table. Christ is present among us in this time and place whether it be a festive Eucharist in a grand cathedral or a quiet early morning communion in a humble country parish. He is taken and recognized in the breaking of the bread in Holy Communion, but he is never consumed, never used up. Like the manna in the Old Testament that was found new and fresh each morning, Christ's resurrected presence among us is made new every time we break bread together and share his life with others. And we still meet him and recognise him in the breaking of the bread.

Sadly, we are unable to come together as the community of faith to do this, but for now all we can do is walk and converse with him. We seem to be doing a lot of walking these days as part of our daily allowance of exercise. But unlike those disciples, may our eyes be open to recognise the living resurrected Jesus who walks with us along the way.

And let us look forward to when we can meet him in the breaking of the bread.

Geoffrey, April 2020