

Let us pray... Creator God, Open the eyes to our hearts, help us to slow down, to take time and recognize the many ways you invite us into your love... Amen...

About 10 years ago, my sister and I took a road trip out west. We did a large loop and stopped mainly at National Parks and Breweries.

It took us about 2 weeks and for the most part, we got along quite well, with just a few sisterly quarrels.

Unfortunately, it was on this trip that my sister quickly realized she had a fear of driving longer distances on highways...

So here we were on this exciting adventure, one where we had planned to split up the driving, and my sister couldn't help very much...

That is, until it was time for one of us to make lunch...

Because she didn't like doing that even more...

So, we would switch who was driving, I would make us sandwiches, eat mine, and then I would drive again...

Driving in a Impala that is... So, it was not the most user-friendly space for balancing a cutting board while gathering all of the ingredients from the back seat...

And looking back now, I wonder... Why didn't we just make the sandwiches before we left in the morning???

Well, it was probably because of our vain attempt to save time, so that we could get to our next destination as fast as possible...

Which is a lot like life... The rushing and the business that encompasses so much of our days.

There is always something to do, somewhere to go, or someone to see.

Making it hard to stop, to pause, and to be present with God.

Which of course is nothing new... And our gospel reading sheds light on this very situation...

And even though we are in the third week of Easter, our gospel reading today is situated on Easter... Specifically, after the women arrived at the empty tomb.

An Easter that was much different for these two disciples... As they had not yet seen the risen Christ nor had they experienced Easter joy.

Instead, these disciples were confused, sad, and wondering what was really going on...

They were so engulfed in their own sorrows they didn't notice the blossoming trees alongside the road...the green blades of grass that rose up to meet them...the birds darting joyfully in the afternoon sun...

But most of all, they didn't recognize the man who walked and talked alongside of them.

And it was only when they stopped that they recognized him...

Only when they took a break, allowing Jesus to break the bread, that Christ was made known to them...

Shedding light on the importance of taking a break and of breaking bread together...

Two things that can often be countercultural in our society...

As society seems to discourage taking breaks, and instead wants to push us to our limits, encouraging us to behave more like the energizer bunny...

And especially since covid a scarcity mindset has become ever more prevalent, which goes directly against sharing and breaking bread with others.

But it was only when Jesus broke the bread that the disciples' eyes and hearts were opened...

And this act of breaking bread is important, because you cannot share bread without breaking it apart first...

Something that is also long lost on society today, because so many loaves of bread come with the convenience of being pre-sliced.

Again, showing societies goal to establish efficiency...

Now there is nothing wrong with efficiency itself... But it can become a problem when that is our only goal, and when we try to get from point A to point B as fast as possible...

Because when you do that, you miss seeing God in your midst journeying alongside of you... Just like the disciples did...

Which also becomes a missed opportunity for us to be fed, fueled, and nurtured by God.

For example, when my sister and I on were on our road trip, by eating our lunch in the car, we missed getting a mental break from the road, getting some fresh air, a stretch, and a chance to eat lunch outside somewhere.

Sure, we got to our destination faster, but it was more stressful for both of us to eat lunch how we did...

My sister's anxiety went up because of her fear of driving and I had to be uncomfortable making some silly sandwiches, never really getting a break, and enjoying my time as a passenger.

Because trying to be too efficient can cause one to lose focus on what is really important... our sanity, our relationships, and embracing God in our midst.

And I still struggle with this, I eat most of my lunches at my desk trying to multi-task, so that I can accomplish as much as possible.

And I get it... Life is busy, and you are busy, but we all have choices to make and the choices we make by not making a choice...

And there is grace even in this... As the overall good news of this gospel was that Jesus was with his disciples all along... So, on the days you are just too busy, please don't be too harder on yourself...

Instead, think of this gospel as an open invitation... Because God is always with you, God is just waiting to reveal Godself to you when you are ready.

This gospel is encouragement for us to stop and dwell with God and with others around us...

Which is one of the reasons why I start worship how I do, centering ourselves in silence with God and one another... Because it is important to be intentional and to take the time to be present with God and with one another....

And it is my hope that this practice can become something that you can embrace. Both by yourself and with others, by finding sabbath moments every day.

As these are the moments that fuel you up... Allowing you to reflect on your day and how God was present with you.

Allowing you to immerse yourself in the beauty around you, giving you opportunities to notice what is sprouting up along the way.

Opportunities to soak up God's love. To fuel your body, mind, and spirit... So that you can have energy for what lies ahead...

And when you invite others to do the same, when you invite others to break bread with you, what can happen next, may just surprise you.

Because it is in the breaking of the bread, in the sharing of the cup, and in being present with one another that God's love is always found...

And it doesn't need to be in the breaking of the bread for communion, it can be through the breaking of the bread in community with one another.

Because God wants you to be more than fed... God wants you to have all of the nourishment and sustenance that you need... Which is why Christ revealed himself at the meal...

Because Christ's love is more potent than any superfood... And it was given for you and it continues to be given to you...

May your hearts be opened to this truth and may your body embrace these moments, and of finding God along the way... Amen.