

Overall, I trust my living in Tucson has not been a negative factor in my ministry with you, but one way in which it does deprive you is not really getting to know my wife, Patricia, whom I usually wake only long enough for a good-bye kiss, and then leave under the watch of our dogs when I head out of the house for here on Sunday mornings. I am protective of her: though her work schedule is irregular, it does tire her, and she is one of those who needs far more than eight hours a night.

As I have said often, I was widowed almost sixteen years ago; four months later, I met Patricia through an Internet dating service, and our first date was the day before I was going to take my parents and my maternal (step mom's mother) grandmother to dinner to celebrate her 101st birthday. I had given her the name, "Mom-mom," she spelled it with two "o's," when I was first trying to talk, and being her first grandchild, that set the name by which all subsequent grandchildren would know her. So what a surprise as Patricia and I were sharing Patricia's life story that she referred to her grandmother as "Mum-mum," though *she* spelled it with two "u's."

It was "Mum-mum," the name by which Patricia has wanted to be, and is, called by our grand-daughters, who really raised Patricia from age six, paid for her education from second grade through high school in a Catholic boarding school an half-hour or so distant, and, I believe, helped pay for her pharmacy college (Patricia lived with her through pharmacy school). Mum-mum was born in Ballycastle in County Mayo in the north of Ireland, then had gone to Glasgow -- Jessie knows where that is and speaks the language -- to find work, as a housekeeper. There she met a young IRA sympathizing Irishman, his brother was hung by the British -- who had come from Galway "under cover of night," as Patricia says, and who was working in a coal mine there. They married, had at least most of their five children, if I am not mistaken -- no, wait: Mum-mum actually gave birth to eleven, but six died as infants or toddlers of cystic fibrosis, and to escape her grief, they moved, eventually to Pittsburgh, where Patricia's father was born, where her grandfather worked in a coal mine there, and ultimately ended up in the Philadelphia area, Chester, to be exact.

Despite -- or maybe because of -- these pregnancies and their aftermaths, Mum-mum and Patricia's grandfather, of whom Mum-mum would say to Patricia, "Tell the Baron his dinner is ready," carried on little -- *no*, as Patricia tells it, *no* conversation. But Patricia remembers expressions one or the other would use. Some of Mum-mum's were the usual, "bull in the china closet," but every day this Irish Catholic would say, "Get the g**-d***** English out of Ireland." The Baron's sayings were coarser, whether in Gaelic or English; two struck me, particularly when Patricia and I went to Key West, where I think that if some people did not have bad taste, they would have no taste at all. One I cannot use, but the Baron's other

was for use upon seeing a person, say, in a polka dot shirt and striped Bermuda shorts with plaid socks and black shoes, or what have you:

"What you see when you don't have a gun."

Which raises the question, what do we see when we look at other people? and what do they see when they look at us? The Baron and Mum-mum both died before I met Patricia, so I knew neither, and I am not being critical of the Baron, only having fun with him, but if all you and I see when we look at others is a garish outfit or weird haircut, or any aspect of physical appearance as our basis of judgement, are we really seeing that person? And if all someone sees of you or me is a flashy pair of socks, is he or she seeing who you or I really are, forget who we want to be seen as?

The post-resurrection stories are an interesting challenge. I cut short what I had put in your bulletin as the second part of the "The Road to Emmaus" story; the omitted part is Luke's version of what happened on the evening of the first Easter, similar to but different from the first part of the story we read from John last week, in which Jesus entered a closed house and stood among his remaining disciples. But the aspects of the "Road" part of today's story have always interested me, first because the men walking apparently knew, or had at least seen, Jesus before his crucifixion, yet did not recognize him, and second, because of the way they said they finally were able to recognize him, "in the breaking of the bread."

In other words, it seems to me that "The Road to Emmaus" is as much a teaching about *how to* live the Christian life as it is a story about the risen Jesus, and that the "how to" requires us to look at both sides -- there are three people so I cannot say, "both parties" -- to look at both sides of today's Gospel lesson, the two men walking and looking but not seeing, and at Jesus, who is looked at but not seen, and then to draw two very specific lessons.

The first side of the lesson is that after wondering "What you see when you don't have a gun," we are too often, maybe always, looking at others, but not *seeing* real persons, seeing just visible traits. Sometimes our judgements of another's appearance or behavior can -- I am human, too, I know this to be a problem for me at times -- another's appearance or behavior can cause us to focus on that alone and miss *seeing*. In the movie, "The Elephant Man," based upon a historical figure, John Hurt's character, the nineteenth century Englishman, Joseph Merrick, cries out at those studying him, "I am not an animal! I am a man!" That fellow of whom I am critical and thinking, "What you see when you don't have a gun," because he leaves his baseball cap on his head, often backwards, while seated in a restaurant, may be

poorly mannered, but he is a man! He is a child of God; she is a child of God -- though I have seen few "she's" wearing backward facing baseball hats at Old Pueblo.

A man, or a woman, a child of God, yet maybe more, as well. . . but let me return to that and to one of my constant mantras in a moment.

The other side of the lesson in "The Walk" is not to be found in the walkers, but in Jesus, whom the two walkers ultimately recognized *not* because of his appearance or even knowledge and explanation of Scripture, but "in the breaking of bread." I am not saying that ministers should be known for how they administer the Sacrament, I am saying that you and I will ultimately be seen -- or rather, want to be seen by others and by God -- not for cool socks or well coifed hair or similar attributes, but for the way in which people can perceive Jesus in us! Can see Jesus in us, and that will come from a number of things, but virtually all of them will come from the way we are with others, and whether we show others the love we are called upon to show them.

I am not particularly a "social gospel" individual; I believe that there is no specific way that is *the* way Christians are called upon to make this a better world. Thus, when I noted something this past week, some sort of anniversary of the late journalist and activist Dorothy Day, who cofounded the Catholic Workers Movement, I passed over the item. (To my surprise, she was an earlier fellow alum of the University of Illinois.) But I also saw in a completely different place something about a book or thesis about her and Thomas Merton. Merton was the monk who wrote a once popular book, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, and I could never care to read or learn about him, because he lived his life *away* from other people. The point I want to make is, I might well disagree with Dorothy Day's interpretation of the role of Christians in labor issues, but I see her as trying to show Jesus' love to those, and on behalf of those, whom she sought to serve. She tried to show Jesus in the way she lived and in what she did; she is a better model for you and me than the most brilliant writer who locked herself or himself up with a typewriter -- or computer, now.

Letting people see Jesus in us! But my mantra, of course, repeated innumerable times, is that we never know when we might be the way the woman with the screaming kids in front of us in the checkout line at Walmart encounters Jesus, *and that she might be the way we encounter Jesus*. Yes, we need to be able to see Jesus in what we think might be the least likely of persons.

"What you see when you don't have a gun" should be, *What we don't see when we don't have our hearts open to see*.

And there are many ways we can be Jesus, can allow others to see Jesus, in us. Sometimes this is through our work -- school teachers and retired school teachers have and have had this opportunity, and we can surely all remember times and teachers when that happened. But one need not be a teacher for this opportunity, professionally or otherwise, to arise. And similarly, again taking the other side, we have many opportunities to see Jesus in the acts of others.

Let our eyes, even after our optical vision has dimmed or left us, let the eyes of our hearts and the eyes of our minds be open to see Jesus in the work and presence of others, just as let us always keep open the doors and shutters of our hearts to let others see Jesus in us, if not in our "breaking of bread," in our understanding smiles and in the empathy and embracing in our faces and in our demeanors.

I had originally thought that I could readily weave into today's sermon another point -- maybe it is really two or three points -- that I try to inject several times a year. The weaving would not be smooth, so I am making a sharp transition. I am a "two boats and a helicopter" theologian; I believe God does most of God's miraculous actions through the frequently normal actions of people. And I like to raise this in a specific context: emotional and mental health issues. Statistically, one out of every four of us suffers some level of depression; I know certain of you who suffer it, others, I do not. Some of you suffer more severe forms of such emotional or mental health issues. To all of you I say, "See Jesus, see God, working *through the professionals who work in those areas*: they can do God's work whether they are believers or not." I also encourage those of you who are told to take pharmaceuticals to do so! You are not drug dependent; you are out of the chemical equilibrium those pharmaceuticals work to restore. One of you I even encouraged to ask your doctor to put you into inpatient treatment; your doctor, who may or may not have any faith in God, agreed, and he and those who attended you helped do the Lord's work on your behalf.

At Miriam Reed's suggestion I still hope to have Robert Anderson -- some of you know who he is, he is the fellow who is always heckling me during worship, just kidding, -- I still hope to have Robert, who is a psychiatrist, do a presentation following worship. Robert and I are still trying to figure out how to make that work, but in many ways, the work Robert does is of a piece, a very specialized and highly trained piece, with what I aspire to do through my evangelizing: help everyone know the joy that God wants us to know in our lives. Joy is not necessarily what we think of as "happiness," but it is the opposite of despair.

So while that did not really weave in, I believe it does reinforce my point: someone else may help you find the joy God intends, but, well, "*What you see when your eyes are open.*"

Let us allow Jesus to be seen in us, and let us always be open to see Jesus in the person and work of another.

Amen.