

**Bishop's Homily**  
**RESURRECTION PARISH – CAMBRIA CITY**  
**Inauguration Mass – July 26, 2009**

Cambria City has been known for its history. Today is another page in that volume. As the Faithful of past decades took steps to practice their Faith with a renewed vigor and life, the Faithful of today are doing the same today. And, - so, - the name of Resurrection Parish. And, - so, - the Mass of the Resurrection that we celebrate this afternoon.

At the very outset of my remarks, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the members of the Parish Pastoral Council, who – as the Cambria City Transitional Council – became a leading force in bringing the five current parishes together in order to witness more authentically to the one Church of which we are a part. That gratitude goes out to the pastors and parishioners that supported them.

As Diocesan Bishop, I am both edified and encouraged by the number of households that decided to remain as members of the Cambria City Roman Catholic Parish and pre-registered as participating members of Resurrection Parish. At the same time, I am well aware of the hurt that the merger of parishes and the closing of churches cause, as those parishes and churches have become memorials to the identity of many, - something that we do not want to lose in this merger. But, there is something more than buildings and earthly associations involved here.

Your new Pastor, Father Alan Thomas, has already gained my deepest respect and gratitude. He is an effective pastoral leader, who knows his God and loves his people. You should know that he actually wanted to be your Pastor and offered himself to lead you into that new chapter of your faith journey into the Lord's Reign. Please treat him well and walk with him, - for his only goal is that you find favor with the Lord, our God.

The Gospel Proclamation chosen for today is that familiar event of the disciples returning home to Emmaus, - following the Crucifixion and their extreme disappointment that things did not turn out the way that they thought they should. How appropriate! I believe that this day is one when we, too, find Jesus walking with us in a way that He has not done thus far. We, too, are challenged to reflect on the past and upon what has occurred, - and see in all that God's plan for our salvation and the future of his Church. Yes, - even the hurts, - even the difficulties, - even the crucifixions.

Our recognizing the Lord in the Breaking of Bread, which is the Eucharist, brings our ordinary life into an extraordinary relationship. It is one that does not allow us to stay at Emmaus. Rather, it is one that prompts us to rush on to the wider Church and proclaim what we have experienced and how we have been led to see that all that we thought a loss is actually (in some way) a part of the Lord's overall plan for us and for those that come after us.

The Eucharist, through which the Lord is present to us and by which He nourishes us is the center of our Faith Life as Roman Catholics. We are not who we are without it, - for we are a Eucharistic People. That means that we also live the Eucharist. You are doing so today. Let me explain.

The regular Gospel passage for this the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time is that of the multiplication of the loaves and fish. It is from the Gospel According to Saint John. Great crowds follow Jesus and his Apostles. He is concerned about their welfare and asks his Apostles how they can feed them. They replied that they do not have enough to take care of such a great need. Then, Jesus performs the miracle.

In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it is the Apostles that go to Jesus and ask him to feed the crowd. His response is, "You feed them." They reply that they are not able to do so. That is when Jesus tells them to bring him the food that they do have. When they do, He blesses it, and everyone gets their fill. Actually, there is a lot left over.

I see a similarity here. The crowds that worshiped in Cambria City could not have their needs adequately addressed by this or another one of the current parishes. And, so, we prayed to the Lord. Help us in this situation. His response came loud and clear, "You take care of it." And, so you did. Those parishes that have more put in with those that have less, and everyone has enough. It's another miracle. Praise be the Lord!

This Parish of the Resurrection, if it continues to live up to its name and remembers its own Emmaus journey, can be the stimulus for the Faith in not only Cambria City, but in Johnstown and the rest of our Diocesan Church, as well. The disciples of Emmaus were for the Church in Jerusalem. It can happen again. I pray that it might. Seeing you, I am encouraged that it will.