

Statement for Website
From Fr. Michael Basque

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Every once in a while I have an “a-ha” moment. I may encounter a situation which I do not understand and then suddenly it makes sense. I may face a problem for which there seems to be no solution and then unexpectedly one appears. I may have to make a decision and not know what to do and then abruptly the choice becomes clear. These experiences teach me how in life no amount of foresight and planning can prepare you for every situation you will face. However, somehow everything works out.

In today’s Gospel the two disciples who encountered the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus recognized him at the breaking of the bread. As I outlined in earlier post on this same Gospel, Cleopas and his companion were confused and disillusioned by the Passion and Death of Jesus who they had left everything to follow. News of Christ’s empty tomb and that he had risen added to the confusion. Christ’s (unrecognized) presence and explanation of how the Messiah had to suffer according to the Scriptures provided some help but it wasn’t until the breaking of the bread at table that everything snapped into place. Their “a-ha” moment connected what they had just experienced during the past few days with the unfolding of God’s plan in Scripture and pointed towards a new future for everyone. This revelation was unexpected and the disciples were unprepared for it. Yet, these factors did not undermine their response to it. Their hearts were “burning” as they recalled what Jesus said on the road and they resolved to return to Jerusalem at night so this news could be shared with their friends. Although their future was uncertain, everything was going to work out.

Catholics and other people of faith understand God is a mystery which no human being will ever understand. This acceptance enables them to recognize that life is a mystery to be lived rather than a problem to be solved. During this Covid-19 pandemic, many people of faith, like the rest of society are baffled by what is happening around them. Yet, times like this can also teach us things about ourselves and life itself. A while ago, I had a plan for what I was going to do this summer: what books I was going to read, which postponed parish projects I could finally complete and where I was going to go for some time off. Now all those plans have been thrown into confusion. As someone who likes to plan ahead so things will get done, I found this difficult to accept. My “a-ha” moment came a few days ago when I asked myself “so what?” There will be things I get done this summer and others things might have to wait until another time. If I die tomorrow, will God really hold it against me that I never got around to thinning out my library? Maybe I should remain open to what God drops into my life today and appreciate it because somehow everything always seems to work out. I only hope I can retain this attitude beyond next week. Old habits die hard.

“A-ha” moments happen at the most unexpected times, like the middle of a pandemic. While we may be unprepared for them, we have to recognize them when they occur. It would be tragic if God were trying to teach us something and we were too distracted to notice.