

What an emotional rollercoaster!

Jesus and the disciples begin Holy Week or for them their Passover preparations with a joyous parade. Like if it were open they'd be going to Disney World kind of parade. Like the Cubs won the World Series type of parade. They had this exuberant, joyful, celebratory procession up to Jerusalem.

The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus then appointed two unnamed disciples (perhaps the event coordinators in the group) to find a place for them to celebrate the Passover meal. Scholars estimate that during the time of Jesus Jerusalem would have been flooded with approximately 2 million people during the Jewish feast of the Passover. I imagine their responses to Jesus' last minute request being similar to someone who asked me get NYE dinner reservations on December 30th. Nevertheless, these two get the job done (without the help of Open Table) and find a spot for the group to gather for the Passover dinner.

I doubt that these two disciples understood what the upper room that they had selected would be the site of. For the disciples the upper room is where they celebrated the Passover with Jesus. Where Jesus washed their feet and where they hid out of fear after the crucifixion of Jesus. The upper room is where the disciples encounter the resurrected Christ and where they and the Church received the gift of the Holy Spirit. All of these wonderful and confusing events occur away from society and others in the same upper room.

Think about the selection of your own apartment or home. Maybe you are in a walk-up or high-rise building – you have your own upper room. It's likely seen its moments of joy and optimism, of exhaustion and despair, of fear and of hopeful new beginnings.

You've no doubt had some daydreams about the events that would occur in your place, but you probably had not anticipated ALL of the moments you've experienced there. I know I didn't select my condo thinking is this a place I could hunker down in for over a month? I am inclined to think that when those two disciples chose the spot for the celebration of their Passover dinner they didn't think about all the events that they were going to have to ride out in that upper room. I think that we and the may have experienced similar shelter in place emotional rollercoasters.

Disciples: Oh isn't this nice all of us gathered here to remember the deliverance of our ancestors out of slavery?

Us: Oh it is so nice to celebrate holidays here with family and friends.

Disciples: Wait Jesus is washing our feet?

Us: Wait after March 30th I won't be able to go out to eat at a restaurant?

Disciples: Jesus is arrested?!?

Us: Uh, my kids won't physically be going to school for a while and I cannot take them out to a park or the lakefront?

Disciples: This guy that we've been followers of has just been killed?!?!?

Us: Coronavirus numbers are rising and we are running out of hospital beds and medical equipment?

Disciples: Are they going to crucify us next??

Us: This is my last paycheck before I am laid off or furloughed.

Disciples: Oh Jesus is here!?!?

Us: Oh Jesus is here!

The roller coaster stops. We end up at the same spot, the disciples and us. The confusion, the fear, the sadness, the despair, and the sense of loss the disciples and we end with the recognition of the presence of Jesus in our lives and in our "upper rooms."

Now that our place of worship comes with a couch we may not recognize him at first. Like the disciples gathered in the upper room Jesus may appear to us in a way in which we are not accustomed to seeing him. Maybe we experience him on a Zoom call, or maybe in someone we see outside of our window or maybe we pause and see God and Jesus in the sight of the peaceful full moon

While we are forced to sit in our upper rooms we are being given the chance to open ourselves up to new ways of seeing and responding to Jesus. Just like the disciples what we will have experienced and seen in our upper rooms will inevitably change us. And just like the disciples we will eventually leave our upper rooms. And then what? What will we do with the new ways that we've encountered Jesus?

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What emotions have you felt over the past weeks?

What moments of hope and joy have you experienced in your upper room?

How has Jesus shown up into your "upper room?"

Do you see Jesus any differently now? If yes, how so?