



## *Reflection from Fr. Garry 4/24/2020*

Some of us are cooking at home more these days as we are social distancing. We may even be trying some new recipes.

A recipe supposedly tells you all you need to know about the dish – the ingredients, how to combine the ingredients, how to cook it, etc. Theoretically, following a recipe should result in a finished product that looks exactly like the picture of the dish which often accompanies the recipe. But as any experienced cook knows, that is not always the case. There is something in the actual making of the dish which teaches the cook more than the recipe can. It is this experiential knowledge that is essential for fully understanding what the recipe is all about.

We see an example of this in the gospel for this Sunday. The two disciples are walking to Emmaus when (unrecognized) Jesus joins them. Jesus proceeds to explain to them the meaning of all the scriptures that refer to the Messiah. This was the recipe – the valuable information about who Jesus was and what he was about. But it was only in the experience of the breaking of the bread, the sharing of the meal, that they truly recognized who he was. They then proceeded to follow the “recipe” and returned to Jerusalem to proclaim the Good News to the rest of the disciples.

We live in the information age, as some call it. We have many facts at our fingertips. There is nothing wrong with relying on information to guide us. But we sometimes make the mistake of assuming that information gives us the full picture. We forget that we need the experience in addition to the information for fuller understanding.

Someone I know will not go into water above his knees. For a long time I simply figured he was weird and a little crazy, basing my assessment on that one fact. Only when he told me the story of nearly drowning as a child (which gave me a vicarious experience of the fear involved in that event) did I come to greater understanding of who he was.

Our law makers collect tons of information on the causes of poverty and homelessness, and they use this information to try to deal with it. One of the main reasons they are not successful is that they don't fully understand it because they lack direct experiential knowledge of what poverty is all about. Unfortunately, many are not interested in delving into the issue deep enough to get some

significant experience and fuller understanding, which would equip them to take more effective action.

We have plenty of facts and information. What we really need is hands-on, real life, down to earth experience which connects us with reality and each other in ways information cannot. That is why, for example, having a meal with others is so important. That is why we gather together (in normal times) for worship rather than praying alone. It is the experience that changes us, not just the intellectual belief in theological concepts and truths.

Recipes remain simply theoretical ideas until someone translates them into reality with their work, their energy, their ideas, their personality, and their way of doing things. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, may we not only believe in what Jesus taught, but also make it our daily experience.

*Blessings, Fr. Garry*