

# *Sunday Families* by **FR. TONY**

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## **Sunday Homily 04-19-2026**

We celebrate everything with a good meal. Growing up birthdays, anniversaries, funerals, baptisms, Easter, Christmas, and Thanksgiving, everything with a good meal. The Parish of St. Theresa's in Panhandle is the same way, there was nothing that could happen that a potluck couldn't make better, tables and tables of food. The Church always provided the meat usually pit roasted beef sometimes ham. Each family was to bring something by their last name. The "N's" would be assigned to bring vegetables. My mother would always make broccoli and rice. The food would begin with roasters of meat, followed by homemade sauce, then potato dishes, and vegetables, and salads, and bread, and finally tables of deserts of all kinds. You would go through the line trying a bit of this and a bit of that. There would be all kinds of food left over, except for certain items. You watched for Mrs. Conrad's potato casserole or Mr. Bednorz's barbecue sauce, the Sister's cookies, and Grandma's cherry pies. There were others of course, but these never had leftovers, people would fight to get some because they made the best. Perhaps it is that way in your family when you get together, each person has a specialty dish that they are called

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on to make. My Grandma Webber made the best potato salad I have ever tasted, none of us can make it the same, but mine is the closest so that is my job for a family get together. I also make the mashed potatoes. When we come together as a family around the table, each of us has a certain something that the others want to make sure gets there.

As Catholic Christians the gospel today is our story, more so than any other section of the Gospels, this story of the meeting of Jesus on the way to Emmaus is ours. It should absolutely define everything we say about ourselves. It is our story. You may ask, “Why,” because we recognize Jesus preeminently in the breaking of the bread. Every week we gather to have the scriptures opened for us. We gather as a church body with a common goal, salvation. Every week we enter into the sacramental mysteries to be focused on the Eucharist. This moment of intimate communion with Christ and His Church should be the central moment of our lives.

Every day we are caught in that struggle to discover, “Who is Jesus?” We walk as friends trying to figure out, “Who is Jesus?” Today we are given the opportunity to listen in as these followers of Jesus walk the way.

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Jesus encounters them but they do not recognize him. They are discussing “Who is Jesus?” This stranger comes up and asks what are you discussing about this fellow Jesus, “Who is He?” The one tells him, “He was a prophet, mighty in word and deed.” Cleopas tells him, “Our leaders handed him over to be killed.” “And we thought he was to be the one to redeem Israel, but he wasn’t. In the end he let us all down. He was a false Messiah.” Cleopas’ dreams and hopes are shattered. Cleopas is absolutely certain that Jesus was just another waste of time. Cleopas tells the hidden Jesus, “That these women are telling stories that he is raised from the dead.” We know that they don’t believe these women. They are walking away from Jerusalem; dejected and forlorn.

Isn’t this the story of most believers in our contemporary world? Jesus was a great teacher of a good way to live, he excited people to follow him, he crossed the leaders of his time, and he was killed. After his death, there are the fantastical stories of his resurrection. Wouldn’t most people in the world today who have heard the stories agree to these basic truths? We must answer yes. Most people are on this road to Emmaus away from Jerusalem, the Holy City, the Church, the Body of Christ.

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So Jesus tells them, “How slow is your heart. Don’t you see that this was meant from the beginning? Don’t you see? The Messiah showed the love of God for His people, by suffering and death of His son.” He begins with Moses, and the prophets, and the Wisdom of the ages to show them that the purpose of the Messiah is not to become a worldly power, but to make present the Love of God unto death. They hang on His every word. They want Him to stay the evening, so He shows them the mystery. He takes the bread and blesses it and breaks it and gives it to them. In this moment the great act of self-emptying love, opens their eyes. And it all makes sense. In the most vivid way possible the breaking of the bread their eyes are open in the pattern of Love of the Eucharist. Their hearts burn within him when he explains the scriptures and they hunger to know the Lord, and they encounter him in the Breaking of the Bread.

In the midst of the late hour, the darkness of the world, their fears and uncertainties, they rush back to Jerusalem to the eleven to tell the good news. Brothers and sisters this is our story it is the story of the Liturgy. Our hearts are caught on fire with the scriptures and our eyes are opened in the Eucharist, so that we may go out into the world to tell the Good News. Here

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we enter into the Heavenly Potluck. Our meal is the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. He unites us with our gifts and our failings to strengthen us in holiness. And all we have to do is bring ourselves and be prepared to receive grace upon grace calling us to eternal life.