

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, April 23, 2023
Third Sunday of Easter
Cycle A

If you are an NBA fan, you will surely be able to identify the players behind these famous monickers: “Magic” is Earvin Johnson of the Lakers. “Legend” is Larry Bird of the Celtics. If you say “Air”, Michael Jordan comes to mind because he played above the rim. “Mr. Iceman” is George Gervin of the San Antonio Spurs with his cool finger roll shots. “The Flash” is Dwyane Wade of the Miami Heat and his cat quick reflexes. “The King” is Lebron James of the Lakers.

There are words, actions, and demeanors that become the trademark of certain people. It characterizes them. It brands them. It identifies them. Even in their absence, when people encounter such trademarks in others, they are reminded of the person.

In today’s Gospel, the Risen Jesus appears to two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Like in all resurrection appearance narratives, the Risen Jesus was not immediately recognized. And like in all resurrection narratives, Jesus does something that reveals definitively His identity as the Risen One. In the case of Mary Magdalene, for example, it was when Jesus spoke her name “Mary” that Mary recognized him.

In today’s Gospel, it was when Jesus broke the bread, that their eyes were opened and they recognized Him. Notice that Jesus was invited by the two disciples to dine with them in the village inn. They were the host of this “stranger”. They were supposed to be the one to break the bread and offer it to the guest as a sign of service and hospitality. But Jesus took the bread instead and broke it and gave it to them. He was the guest, but He was the one who served and showed hospitality.

That was the mark of Jesus—always giving, always serving, always making Himself last. No one else could have done that. That’s why they recognized Him at that moment. For the two disciples at Emmaus, that gesture was the defining moment

As Catholic Christians we have our own trademarks too. The Eucharist and the sign of the cross. But our Lord invites all of us to live the greatest mark of being His followers, the trademark of Love. People may recognize who we are by the love and care that we have shown to them. People will recognize the presence of the Risen Lord through our very own lives.

Amen