

The week of February 27th there was a grand opening of a new strip mall in Janesville. Called the Marketplace this site introduced the community to a couple of new stores with two more stores slated to open in the future. New places to shop. All kinds of sale items to browse through. There is nothing like a grand opening. Conversely, who doesn't feel bad at the news of a closing. This week it was announced that a number of Boston Stores in the area would be closing. And we have been faced with several months of lane closures on the freeway system in our area. While all of these closures surround us and frustrate us I have to say that nothing is more frustrating than a closed mind.

You know, those situations where there is someone that we try to talk to, reason with, instruct on a matter and they refuse to hear what we have to say; our words bounce right off of them.

In Luke's gospel we witness such a predicament. Jesus has spent most of his ministry trying to teach others about the Kingdom of God. By word and example he attempts to get his disciples, the crowds, and the opposing religious and political leaders to hear his words of hope and encouragement. Sometimes the words were met with joy and sometimes they were rejected. After his resurrection Jesus gave a special grace to open the minds of those who were willing to understand the mystery and purpose of God's plan.

A perfect example of this would be the well known story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. A story that preceded our gospel passage from today. Jesus appears to the disciples but they do not recognize him at first, but then their hearts started to burn within them as the stranger talked with them. It was when they stopped for the evening and broke bread with him that their closed minds were opened and they recognized him.

Then we have the story in the gospel of Luke today, which we just heard where Jesus appears to all the disciples in the room and greets them with a word of peace; but his appearance startles and frightens them. Their minds are closed to his identity and they think that he is a ghost. They cannot absorb the fact that Christ is alive; So to put their fears to rest Jesus asks for fish to eat not because he is hungry but as a way for him to calm them and prove his full presence in their midst. He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures and remind them that they were witnesses of all these things.

This concept of opening one's mind to receive the meaning of scripture isn't just limited to the disciples of Jesus' time. Followers throughout all of history have had the scriptures as a key to unlock their minds to God's plan. That includes all of us sitting here in this church this morning. God through Christ and his Spirit has afforded us

the opportunity to have our minds opened to the power of the scriptures. God has also invited us to join him at this table to share in his Body and God has opened the doors to Paradise for all of us who accept his invitation. Now that is what I call a grand opening.