

Lord, when did we see you ...

IN THE EASTER AND PENTECOST SEASON, LIKE THE EARLY DISCIPLES OF Jesus, we have to let our hearts burn within us as we encounter a presence that we did not anticipate. Mary of Magdala thought she encountered the gardener, a simple day laborer, a caretaker of flowers and fruits. Disciples on the way to Emmaus discovered they were breaking bread with someone who initially appeared to be a complete stranger. A hoard of believers who appeared inebriated at mid-afternoon began speaking and communicating with each other in tongues, in languages they understood and that spoke to their hearts, uniting them in a new Spirit. A fresh springtime emerged, blossoming with buds and flowers that would bear the fruits of a new community of love for one another and reaching beyond all divisions and fears. A faithful Word assured them, "I will be with you always," as you become bread and presence to one another. A surprising joy of new life and resurrection!

When we were in Mexico at the Casa Central (Motherhouse) of our Mexican Benedictine Sisters, we met Brandon de Jesús, a young boy of 10 years whose mother, Josefina, assists the Sisters in their kitchen. Brandon arrived one day after school with a violin case in hand. The Sisters called us aside and informed us that Brandon was hoping to surprise us with a little music he was learning to play on the violin, but he wanted it to be a surprise, so they were not supposed to tell us.

Then when the Sisters left, Brandon called some of us brothers aside and brought us into the room in which he was practicing. He could not wait to share a piece or two with us. He exhibited the seriousness of a seasoned violinist yet the enthusiastic excitement of a young child. It was disarming to experience how thrilled he was to share the few pieces of music he knew. He played well and with such abandon. He offered a gift to us, communicating the presence of the Spirit inviting us all, as Jesus said, to become like little children.

A little later we had the gathering with the Sisters. Brandon was there with his violin ready to bless and gift everyone. He came into the circle where we were all sitting. He turned to each of the four directions of the circle, bowed and played a short violin piece in each direction. A vestige of his ancestral indigenous roots!

"There is a young boy here with five barley loaves and two small fish, but what is that among so many...?" (*John 6: 9*) The loaves and fish multiplied to nourish and refresh a hungry, thirsting, desert people. And the leftovers were plentiful, to share with others.

"Lord, when did we see you ..." (*Matthew 25: 37*) In this bulletin brothers share the many ways our Sisters and friends in Mexico, here at home and elsewhere, have become loaves and fish for us. When hope seemed to dwindle at the promise they thought they had found in Jesus, Peter and the disciples were suddenly awakened to the voice calling from the edge of the shore: "Cast the net over the other side of the boat" (*John 21: 6*) and you will discover that for which you are searching. Our hearts can burn with the unexpected surprise of joy in little people and places on life's journey. ■



Brandon de Jesús