



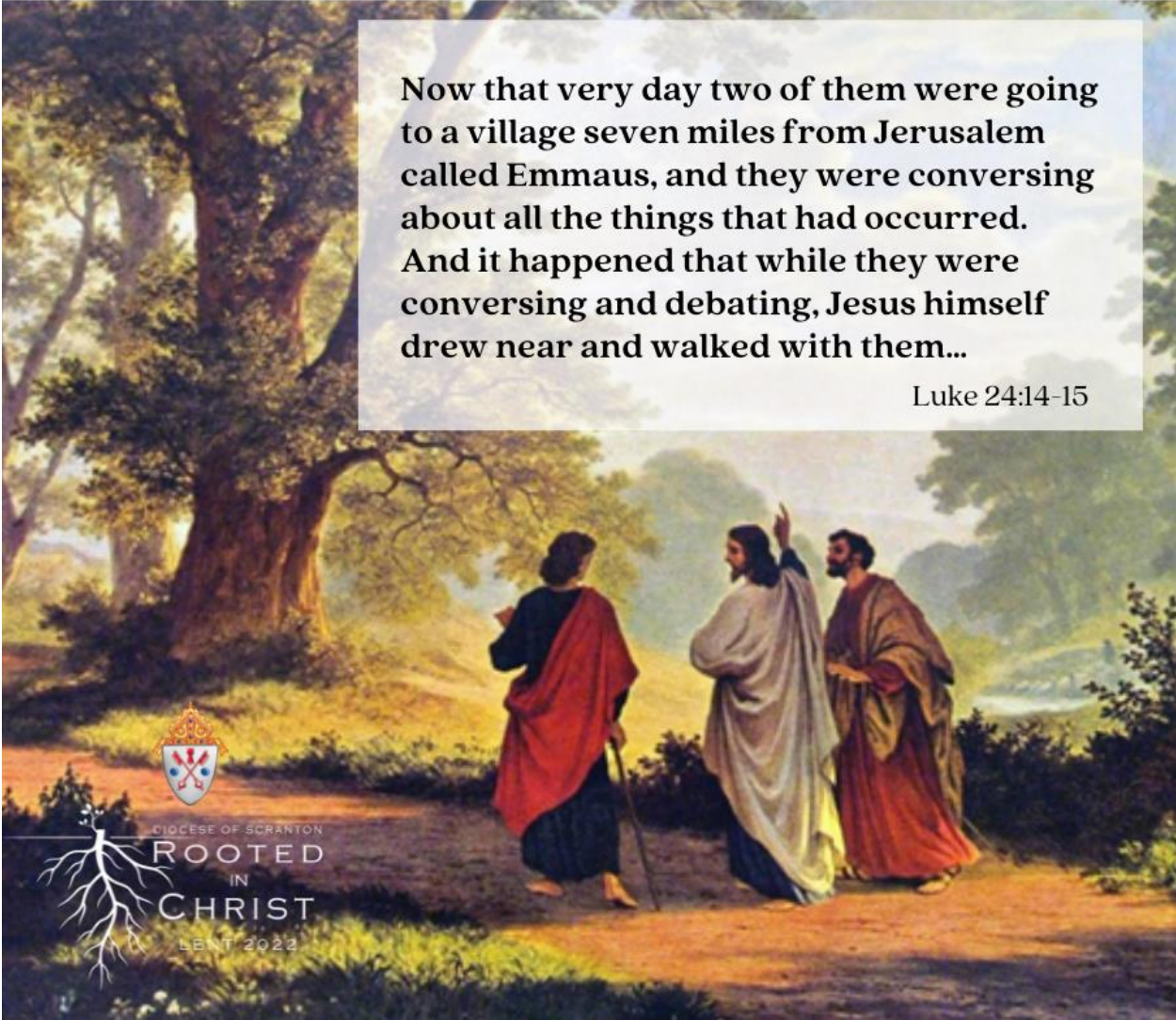
DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

ROOTED IN CHRIST

LENT 2022

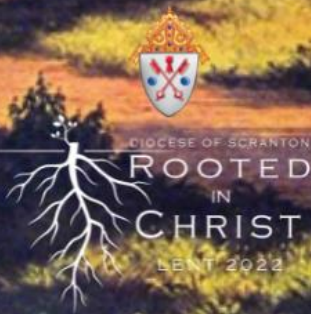


STICK WITH IT *Saturday*



Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them...

Luke 24:14-15



Talking together, having a conversation, it seems these experiences should be easy and natural. Instead, all too often, communicating with one another can be difficult or painful.

"Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding."*

Perseverance and patience are two of the main ingredients needed to be able to "Stick with It" when talking with one another is not easy. How often has it been uncomfortable for you, or possibly deeply painful, to share a matter on your heart? How often has it been painful or challenging for you to hear something difficult shared with you by someone else?

It is natural to shy away from sharing something that may cause someone

pain upon hearing it. It is also natural to want to avoid hearing something painful shared by another, particularly if we have acted in a way that may have contributed to that person's pain.

Dialogue requires perseverance and patience, but it also enables mutual understanding.*

When someone expresses something to you, something that you do not want to hear, how do you respond? Oftentimes we respond with defensiveness, or possibly by shutting that person out. We may also respond by going on the offensive and attacking. If someone has responded to you in these ways, how did that feel? If you have responded in these ways, what did you achieve? Did defensiveness or attacking lead to greater understanding? Did shutting that person out lead to a resolution that was life-giving to both parties?



Engaging in true dialogue can be uncomfortable and even painful, but it is the best way to achieve mutual understanding. Speaking truthfully to one another is necessary, as is speaking kindly. A saying I once learned in an Al-Anon Meeting sums this up perfectly: "**Say what you mean, mean what you say, but don't say it mean.**" You can speak the truth, even a painful truth, in a more loving way. It is easier for someone hearing a challenging truth to accept and understand it if it is delivered with kindness.

Trouble is a part of life, and if you don't share it, you don't give the person who loves you a chance

to love you enough. ~Dinah Shore

If you are receiving a painful truth, are you able to listen simply in order to clearly understand what is being shared? This is when we are challenged to not become defensive or go on the attack. When a person is given the opportunity to express his or her view, and when another person has been gracious enough to listen to and hear that truth, here is where dialogue exists. Once people are courageous enough to engage in dialogue and so to achieve mutual understanding, opportunities for healing, reconciliation, and resolution become possible. Meeting the challenge to go through the struggle can lead to beautiful and fruit-filled results.

**Being heard is so close
to being loved that for
the average person,
they are almost
indistinguishable.**

David Augsburger



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We need to embrace dialogue in our personal relationships, in our work relationships, in our civic relationships, and especially in our personal relationship with God. If we are not willing to share our deepest self with God or be willing to hear what He has to say to us, our relationship with Him will suffer. God may need to tell us things that we do not want to hear – paths He would like to us to take that may frighten us, or prompts to seek reconciliation that we'd prefer to ignore.

As in the scripture and image shared above with Jesus and his disciples on the road to Emmaus, when we seek to engage in loving dialogue together, God finds fertile ground in which to join our conversation. The Holy Spirit can enter the place we've created between us, and help inspire us to a more perfect resolution.

Dialogue is often lacking in our relationships. It is often lacking in our local and national government, and it can be lacking in society more generally too. Sadly, it can also be lacking in our Church.

One of the goals of our church's current *Synod on Synodality* is to rekindle this grace, this gift of inspired dialogue within our Church. If you have not yet heard about or had a chance to participate in our Diocesan *Synod on Synodality* Listening Phase, please click [here](#) to learn more about it and to add your voice to this important conversation.



We Are Listening!

Take the Diocese of Scranton's Online Survey for the Synod on Synodality
at dioceseofscranton.org

(Available in both English and Spanish)

*We invite you to share your joys, sorrows,
hopes and dreams for our church*



Click here for the Online Survey



Jen Housel is the Director for Community & Family Development in the Office for Parish Life. In working with marriage ministries and in her work as part of the Diocesan Synod Team, Jen seeks to encourage dialogue. If you would like to communicate with Jen, or if you would like to learn about more resources related to the topic of dialogue, please reach out: jhousel@dioceseofscranton.org or 570-207-2213 x 1104.

FOR REFLECTION

1. Is there a relationship in your life that would benefit from your practicing more perseverance and patience in your efforts toward better communication and dialogue?
2. During this Lenten Season, Is God calling you to be more vulnerable with Him or perhaps to better hear a way He is challenging you to live a more faith-filled life?
3. If you have not yet done so, will you give our Church the gift of hearing your voice in our *Synod on Synodality*? Access the surveys [here](#) or call 570-591-5024 (English or Spanish) to share your responses.
4. Think of a time when you stuck with a difficult conversation and, by doing so, offered someone in your life the loving gift of listening.

*From: For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission. Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality, 07.09.2021, Section 5.3, published by the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops

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