Homily 4-26-20 Breaking of the Bread Vernon

Sometimes when reading Sacred Scripture it's better to focus on a sentence or two rather than trying to understand a long passage all in one go. Today's gospel is a good example of that. Luke tells us a lot in this reading. But I want to focus on this passage: And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,  
but he vanished from their sight.

Luke is reporting to us what happened after Jesus' Resurrection when He appeared to the disciples. That's easy enough. But note what happened after he blessed the bread, broke it and gave it to them. Only then did the disciples recognize Him. It's very difficult for me to see this as meaning anything other than the Eucharist. Any honest scholar has to do mental gymnastics to not see this as anything other than a reference to Holy Mass, the Real Presence, the Body of Christ, the Eucharist. To further drive home the point Luke says: Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

If Jesus could only be made known to the disciples by the breaking of the bread when He was physically present, how much more important is it for us, two thousand years later to recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread in the Eucharist?

Make no mistake. Jesus wants to made known to everyone. But He wants to be made known in the way he has prescribed: through the Mass.

This brings me to the current pandemic when the Eucharist is denied to most everyone. There should be a certain longing, a hunger that is more than a physical hunger, more than a mere addiction like alcohol or nicotine. There should be a longing for the Body and Blood that is really beyond the human power to describe. By being denied the Body and Blood through no fault of our own we have an opportunity to experience this pang, this longing that's deeper than the Pacific Ocean.

Next week, God willing, the Masses will return to a sort of normality. We will have Masses said at the old usual times with a congregation. There are several caveats. The Bishop asks that those attending Mass wear a mask or scarf. Also, we are to sit with proper social distancing in family units. And we will be dismissed by rows through all three exits. And I will exit through the sacristy. Please note that these plans are fluid and may change. But with God's grace maybe, just maybe we can start to get back to normal.