



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Seeing the Risen Jesus

Luke 24:13-21, 25-33

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them,



'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel... Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these

things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Fr Mark De Battista

The last chapter of St Luke's gospel is long and contains three apparitions of the risen Christ. Our passage today takes up the middle point of this chapter. St Luke makes it clear that the eyes of the two disciples remained closed from something acting upon them from within, thus indicating that it was their shortfall and not something outside of them. This lack of sight is unable to recognise the presence of the risen Christ walking by their side. It is made more explicit by Jesus himself

when he tells them that they are "foolish and slow in heart to believe".

However, their sincerity of spirit does not block them from treasuring the scripture lesson offered by the Lord Jesus. On the contrary, their hearts were burning within them, yet they did not recognise him at the time. It is only when they finally arrive to Emmaus and they invite him in to stay with them that they recognise him in the breaking of the bread. The arrival at the journey's end is also an indication of the arrival in the interior journey with Jesus. Hence, they are now ready

to invite him to eat with them. In the early Church the expression 'breaking of the bread' was also a code for the celebration of the Eucharist.

At this point the English translation says that "he vanished from their sight" whereas the Greek text does not say this at all. Instead, it says that he became 'invisible' to them. The biblical theology of St Luke is eminently clear: Jesus does not leave his disciples, he just becomes invisible to them, only to be recognised again and again in the Eucharist, the breaking of the bread. ■

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS

The road to Emmaus thus becomes a symbol of our journey of faith: the Scriptures and the Eucharist are the indispensable elements for encountering the Lord. We too often go to Sunday Mass with our worries, difficulties and disappointments.... Life sometimes wounds us and we go away feeling sad, towards our “Emmaus”, turning our backs on God’s plan.

We distance ourselves from God. But the Liturgy of the Word welcomes us: Jesus explains the Scriptures to us and rekindles in our hearts the warmth of faith and hope, and in Communion he gives us strength. The Word of God, the Eucharist. Read a passage of the Gospel every day. Remember it well: read a passage from the Gospel every day, and on Sundays go to Communion, to receive Jesus. This is what happened to the disciples of Emmaus: they

received the Word; they shared the breaking of bread and from feeling sad and defeated they became joyful. Dear brothers and sisters, the Word of God and the Eucharist fill us with joy always. Remember it well! When you are sad, take up the Word of God. When you are down, take up the Word of God and go to Sunday Mass and receive Communion, to participate in the mystery of Jesus. The Word of God, the Eucharist: they fill us with joy. ■

TALKING POINTS

1. The Word of God is a source of faith and hope and the Eucharist is a source of strength. Pope Francis encourages us to daily turn to God’s Word and to faithfully participate in the Mass in order to aid us on our journey. How do you find this challenge in your own life? (Share experiences of what has helped)
2. Fr Mark reminds us that Jesus is always present even if “invisible” to our human eyes. Where do you find Jesus present in your life?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for each other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them.

Reflect: The Road to Emmaus shows us Jesus who dwells in the everyday experiences of life. Spend some time praying that God will open our eyes and see Christ in our lives, particularly in those times and places we find most difficult and challenging.

Response: *Stay with us, Lord, and break bread with us.*

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, your presence caused the disciples hearts to burn within them. Your presence was enough to stir joy and hope. You never leave us but we often fail to see you. Please open our eyes and our hearts to see the truth of Emmanuel – you are God with us. Amen.

