

GOSPEL*Luke 24:13-35*

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our

hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

HOMILY OF POPE BENEDICT XVI*8 May 2011 (Excerpt)*

The Gospel of the Third Sunday of Easter — which we have just heard — presents the episode of the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35), an account that never ceases to astonish and move us. This episode shows the effects that the Risen Jesus works in two disciples: conversion from despair to hope; conversion from sorrow to joy; and also conversion to community life. Sometimes, when we speak of conversion we think solely of its demanding aspect of detachment and renunciation. Christian conversion, on the contrary, is also and above all about joy, hope and love. It is always the work of the Risen Christ, the Lord of life who has obtained this grace for us through his Passion and communicates it to us by virtue of his Resurrection.

It is thus necessary for each and every one of us to let ourselves be taught by Jesus, as the two disciples of Emmaus were: first of all by listening to and loving the word of God read in the light of the Paschal Mystery, so that it may warm our hearts and illumine our minds helping us to interpret the events of life and give them meaning. Then it is necessary to sit at table with the Lord, to share the banquet with him, so that his humble presence in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood may restore to us the gaze of faith, in order to see everything and everyone with God's eyes, in the light of his love. Staying with Jesus who has stayed with us, assimilating his lifestyle, choosing with him the logic of communion with each other, of solidarity and of sharing. The Eucharist is the maximum expression of the gift which Jesus makes of himself and is a constant invitation to live our lives in the Eucharistic logic, as a gift to God and to others.

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The Gospel also mentions that after recognizing Jesus in the breaking of the bread, the two disciples “rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem” (Lk 24:33). They felt the need to return to Jerusalem and to tell of their extraordinary experience: the encounter with the Risen Lord. A great effort must be made so that every Christian ... in every other part of the world, may be transformed into a witness, ready to proclaim vigorously and joyfully the event of Christ’s death and Resurrection.

I encourage you never to give in to the recurring temptations of the hedonistic culture and to the appeal of materialistic consumerism. Accept the invitation of the Apostle Peter, contained in today’s Second Reading, to conduct yourselves “with fear throughout the time of your exile” here below (1 Pt 1:17); an invitation that is put into practice by living intensely on the thoroughfares of our world in the awareness of the destination to be reached: unity with God, in the Crucified and Risen Christ.

In fact, our faith and our hope are addressed to God (cf. 1 Pt 1:21): they are addressed to God because they are rooted in him, founded on his love and on his fidelity. In past centuries, your Churches knew a rich tradition of holiness and of generous service to the brethren, thanks to the work of zealous priests and men and women religious of both active and contemplative life. If we wish to listen to their spiritual teaching it is not difficult for us to recognize the personal and

unmistakable appeal that they address to us: Be holy! Make Christ the centre of your lives! Build the edifice of your existence on him! In Jesus you will find the strength to open yourselves to others and to make yourselves, after his example, a gift for the whole of humanity.

Be confident: the Risen Lord is walking with you, yesterday, today and for ever. Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

What stood out to you from the Gospel or Reflection/ Homily?



Head: What changes in the disciples during their journey to Emmaus, and how do Jesus’ words and the breaking of the bread help them move from confusion to understanding?



Heart: In what ways have you experienced moments where sorrow, confusion, or discouragement were gradually transformed into new understanding, hope, or joy?



Hands: After recognising Jesus, the disciples immediately return to share the good news. What might it look like in your own life this week to bring encouragement, hope, or faith to someone who needs it?

PRAYER

Spend some time in prayer with one another:

1. Conscious of what has just been shared, members briefly name/ describe their prayer needs.
2. Intentionally call on the Holy Spirit to be present (e.g. “Come Holy Spirit, please be present as we pray”)
3. Offer prayers of thanks and praise to God.
4. Pray for each others’ prayer needs. Where appropriate, you may like to encourage the group to place a hand on the shoulder of the individual that you are currently praying for.
5. Conclude your prayer time with another prayer of praise, perhaps praying the ‘Glory Be’.