

Jesus on the Road to Emmaus

Grace: Ask for the grace to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great joy and the glory of Jesus.

Introduction:

You have heard of Jesus' resurrection. You may have seen Him personally. Is it possible? Is it a dream? You would not be the first to have trouble believing the news of Jesus' resurrection. Yet Jesus seems to reveal Himself to each of his followers in ways that they will recognize and understand. For some, it is in the breaking of the bread. For Thomas, it means touching Jesus' hands and side. How does Jesus reveal Himself to you?

You and a friend are heading towards the town of Emmaus. Maybe some distance from Jerusalem will do you good. You are so immersed in the conversation that you do not really pay much attention to a companion who joins you. How do you respond to this stranger who seems to not even know that Jesus has been taken from your life before He could do all the great things that you had hoped Jesus would do?



Then as the man begins to speak there is something familiar in His voice and the authority of which He speaks. How do His words make your heart feel as He starts to talk about Jesus? He seems to know Jesus very well and yet you do not recognize Him.

He seems to want to go on further but you have so enjoyed His company that you invite Him to stay. As He holds the bread and shares it with you something very powerful happens as your eyes are opened. Now you recognize Him. It is Jesus!

Of course, now it seems to make sense. How could you not have seen? Then Jesus disappears. You are left with your companion. What do you say to each other? With whom can you share this experience? How do you explain what has happened? What expectations do you have for the future? Where else might you discover Jesus?

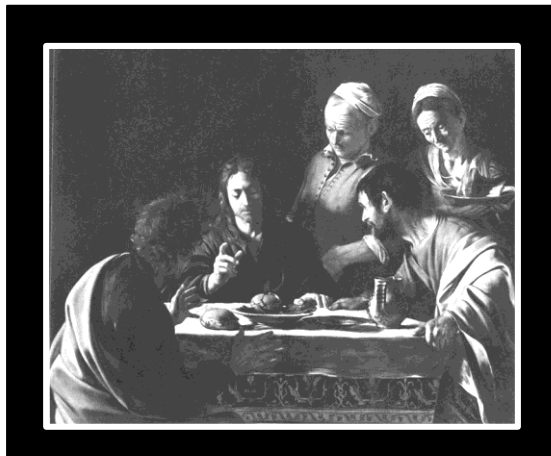
Paying attention to your feelings, how badly do you desire to share Jesus' company? As Isaiah says, "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on Him while he is near." Speak with Jesus who very much wants to share with you the joy of the resurrection. Speak with Jesus who wants to share His joy with you. Let Jesus' words fill your heart and set it on fire.

*Love consists in sharing what one has
and what one is with those one loves.
Love ought to show itself in deeds more than in words.
--St. Ignatius of Loyola*

Luke 24: 13-35 The Appearance on the Road to Emmaus - Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

John 20:19-29 Jesus Appears to the Disciples - On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

In these or similar words ... Me and my friend Cleopas are emotionally drained. One of our friends, our leader, has just recently been crucified. I had followed him to Jerusalem because of his great and marvelous deeds. This man had done things that I thought were impossible to do. He had taught the lame to leap and the dumb to speak! I honestly thought that there was nothing this great prophet couldn't do. But then he was slain at the hands of the high priests and the Romans. I have to get away from this town. Now that Jesus is gone, I feel as though I may have wasted the past few years of my life following him. Depressed and hopeless, Cleopas and I have decided to journey back to our hometown. We, among many others who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem, decided to set out the Monday after he had died. Others and I are hearing some crazy rumors from his inner circle of friends, like that he wasn't buried any more and that he was alive. I was almost happy just to be getting away from them. They all sounded crazy! I mean, I had seen with my own two eyes the man's body go limp as he gave out his dying cry! It sounded as though they were in denial of his death and that they just needed to move on. Cleopas and I walked along and we discussed these things aloud. Up walked a man whom I had never seen before in my life. He must have overheard our conversation. There was this funny feeling I got in my heart as he spoke, as though I had known him a long time and he were a dear friend. He began to tell us how it was Jesus' purpose to die. I was greatly befuddled by this and wanted to argue back but instead I decided to listen to him go on. He began to analyze many different scriptures and explain how the messiah was sent to be a suffering servant and that that included being a servant unto death. I felt my mind being opened; it was as though all the pieces to the puzzle had been sitting there in front of me but I forgot that I had the box cover to interpret them. Everything was sort of beginning to make sense. This traveler seemed like he wanted to go on further when Cleopas and I had reached our destination but I was not done with hearing his analysis. I longed for more nourishment for my mind (and perhaps even my soul).



We all sat down to eat and this man continued to teach us about the scriptures. As he picked up the bread I could see a small smile edging across his face. I didn't quite understand the smile, but I somehow knew it was a good sign. As he broke the bread, I began to recognize him. IT WAS JESUS! I was so excited and freaked out that my mouth just hung wide open. I sat in disbelief as he disappeared RIGHT BEFORE MY VERY EYES! I was so unsure of whether or not I had just seen what I had just seen. But on the plate was the bread torn in two and I was entirely awake. Cleopas said, "Now it all makes sense. That must have been why I could feel a strange excitement in my heart". I thought back and realized that I had really known it was Jesus all along. I just hadn't connected the dots.

Practicing What You Preach ... To better understand the joy of finding Jesus in unexpected places, take a walk with a friend. As you walk, keep the story of Jesus on the road to Emmaus in the back of your mind. After the walk, spend some time reflecting on how Jesus was present to you throughout your walk with your friend. Hopefully, through the Awareness Examen, you have discovered a way of finding God's presence in your everyday life. Continue to connect the dots and to respond to God's grace in your life.

