

***Third Sunday of Easter***  
***April 23, 2023***  
***Year of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Ark of the New Covenant***

As we begin our reflection, let us set the stage for today's Gospel passage. The participants are the risen Jesus Christ and two of His disciples. We know from Luke's writing that one is named Cleopas, yet the other remains unnamed. The time is late afternoon or early evening on the same day as Jesus' Resurrection. This story begins on a road leading southwest from Jerusalem. The two are on their way to a village named Emmaus. The name Emmaus is derived from a Hebrew word "Hammat" meaning "warm spring."

The distance from the city of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus is said to be sixty stadia in one translation or about 7 ½ miles. This would be a journey of about 2 ½ to 3 hours for a man on foot. As they walk along, the risen Christ joins them. Their sadness and sense of hopelessness, because of the events of the past few days, has blinded them to the truth of who He was and what He had done. Recall His question as He listened to the conversation: "What are you discussing as you walk along?" And Jesus listened. He met them where they were, allowing them to voice their pain, participating in their grief. Then He began to prepare them for what was to come, opening Sacred Scripture, patiently guiding them from hopelessness to hopefulness.

Can we put ourselves in the place of these two? How often do we fail to recognize Jesus? How often do we allow the vagaries of this life to blind us to His presence in our lives? Is our focus on the truth [that is Jesus] distorted? Let us continue to look at the story.

As their journey was drawing to a close, the two began to realize that this man who left them wanting more, intended to continue on the road beyond their village. In their desire for more of what He had to offer and because it was late, they begged Him to stay with them for the night. As they sat at table for their evening meal, "He took bread in His hands, said the blessing and gave it to them . . ." Do these words sound vaguely familiar? It was at that moment that the veil that left them blinded was lifted and they realized who He was.

Pope St. John Paul II said that when the two disciples urged Jesus to stay with them, Jesus responded by giving them a way to stay in Him, entering into a "profound communion" with Him—as we can and shortly will—in the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Each of us, on our own walk to Emmaus, are presented with an opportunity for our eyes to once again recognize Jesus' presence in our lives. At each and every Mass, as the scripture is opened before us, the preparation begins, just as it did that day for the two disciples. The veil that blinds each of us is lifted, allowing us to once again recognize and fully participate in the real presence of Christ before us. No matter the darkness, no matter the situation, Jesus will come to meet us on our Road to Emmaus.