

Dear family of God, the theme that runs through all the readings is the **Resurrection of Jesus Christ**. The church recalls the first men and women who experienced the risen Jesus in an attempt to deepen our understanding and faith. In describing those early believers, Gunther Bornkamm once said, "The men and women who encounter the risen Christ in the Easter stories have come to an end of their wisdom. They are alarmed and disturbed by his death, mourners wandering about the grave of the Lord in their helpless love. . . like the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, their last hopes are destroyed" (*Jesus of Nazareth*, New York: 1960). After Jesus' death, they were at a loss; it was only through their *revelatory* experiences of the risen Lord that the disciples began to understand the Jesus event as a *work of God*, which forever changed the course of human history. The resurrection appearances represent the church's understanding concerning **the permanent presence of the risen Lord with us**. All our faith and hope, as believers, are centered on this mystery (1 Peter 1:21).

The first reading presents a **total transformation of the disciples**, who were timid and cowards. Today's reading forms part of Peter's address on the healing of the crippled man from birth. He moves his listeners to repentance because the Jewish people acted out of **ignorance** (Acts 3:17). Indeed, Jesus on the cross prayed "**Father, forgive them for they know not what they do**" (Lk.23:34). Many Jews were moved by grace to ask the apostles what they should do to atone for their sins. Peter encouraged them to change their lives and turn to God. As a matter of fact, this repentance or conversion or change of heart is at the core of the Kingdom of God (Mk.1:15).

In today's gospel, Luke reminds believers that the ultimate encounter with the permanent presence of the risen Jesus comes in the **Breaking of the Bread**, which is the Eucharist. Again, Luke defends the manner of Jesus' ministry and death on the cross as the "**fulfillment of the Scriptures**" (Lk.24: 23). Like the two disciples making their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus, we search for the daily experience of Jesus, which sustains, strengthens, and inspires us. Let us notice the **motif of delayed recognition**, which forms part of the resurrection narratives. Initially, the disciples did not recognize Jesus because he was transformed by the glory of his resurrection. Nevertheless, Luke was careful to underscore the *continuity* between the Jesus whom the disciples had known during his ministry and the risen Lord whom they were now encountering. **Jesus taught them, ate and drank with them and opened their eyes** to the knowledge of his presence. As Jesus "interpreted for them every passage of Scripture which referred to him", the disciples' hearts began to burn within them (Lk.24: 32). They implored him "**Stay with us**"! Then, in a manner, which recalled his last supper with them before his cross, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them; at that point, their eyes were opened; they came to know him.

In addition, Luke draws our attention to the significance of this moment by declaring, "That, their eyes were opened". The term **opened eyes** (mentioned eight times in the New Testament, six of which are in Luke-Acts) indicated a deepened understanding of revelation. In this instance, the disciples' **opened eyes** meant that they had begun to comprehend the mystery of Jesus' death, resurrection and ever present. Jesus' disappearance at the point of recognition was not a disappointment, but also another signal that the risen Lord would remain forever with his disciples in the breaking of the bread and in the sharing of his word.

Finally, we may say, "What a privilege for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to meet Jesus, to listen to him explaining the Scriptures to them and to share bread with them." Yes, it certainly was a wonderful privilege. We might say we would love to have been part of this experience on the road to Emmaus. Fortunately, every time we celebrate the Eucharist here we meet Jesus in the same way. Jesus "interprets all the scriptures to us" and we also listen. Then Jesus "takes the bread and blessed and gives it to us" and we partake of the Body of Jesus in the Eucharist. Let us remember that we have two lit candles on the altar during Mass symbolize these two ways that Christ is present to us in the "**one table of God's Word and Christ's Body**." Therefore, as the Scripture readings are proclaimed, we want to give them our full attention because we are being fed by God. In fact, it is Jesus himself who is talking to us as the Scriptures are proclaimed to us (Vatican

II Sacrosanctum Concilium §7). May our communion with Jesus today, open our eyes to know him, love him and serve him all the days of our life. Amen!