

## SPIRITUALITY

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Luke 24:32

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us;  
make our hearts burn while you speak to us.

R/. Alleluia, alleluia.

**Gospel** Luke 24:13-35; L46A

That very day, the first day of  
the week,  
two of Jesus' disciples were  
going  
to a village seven miles  
from Jerusalem called  
Emmaus,  
and they were conversing  
about all the things that  
had occurred.

And it happened that while they  
were conversing and debating,  
Jesus himself drew near and walked  
with them,  
but their eyes were prevented from  
recognizing him.

He asked them,

"What are you discussing as you walk  
along?"

They stopped, looking downcast.

One of them, named Cleopas, said to him  
in reply,

"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem  
who does not know of the things  
that have taken place there in these  
days?"

And he replied to them, "What sort of  
things?"

They said to him,

"The things that happened to Jesus the  
Nazarene,  
who was a prophet mighty in deed and  
word  
before God and all the people,  
how our chief priests and rulers both  
handed him over  
to a sentence of death and crucified  
him.

### Reflecting on the Gospel

It takes a lifetime of doing to learn that perseverance pays off. When a task taxes our energy, takes too long, becomes more burden than joy, our human tendency is to stop doing it. We look to do something else that brings more immediate satisfaction and delight. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had given up on "Jesus the Nazarene" as the "one to redeem Israel." They did not persevere in looking for Jesus, although they "were [still] conversing about all the things that had occurred." They hadn't quite given up, but their hope was not strong enough to bring them to stay in Jerusalem to determine if Jesus truly "was alive."



Perseverance easily wavers when we are challenged beyond our capacity. The two disciples allowed their perseverance to waver; belief in a dead-but-now-alive Jesus was beyond their experience, beyond their capacity. But the risen Jesus searched them out, walked with them, broke bread with them. Their encounter led to an overwhelming transformation moving them from unbelief to belief. Further, after returning to Jerusalem, their newfound belief was confirmed by a community who attested that "The Lord has truly been raised." We must choose this same journey today, over and over again: encounter the risen Jesus, come to deeper belief, witness to others his risen Presence. Our perseverance in

proclaiming Easter joy must grow as our belief in the risen One grows. It takes a lifetime of doing to learn that perseverance pays off.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus experience an overwhelming transformation in moving from unbelief to belief—not because of any new facts or hearsay, but because of personal encounter with the risen Jesus in his breaking open the Scriptures and the bread with them. Further, after returning to Jerusalem, their newfound belief is confirmed by a community of eyewitnesses who had seen the risen Jesus, too: "The Lord has truly been raised." The same is true for us today: we are transformed by encountering the risen Christ in word and sacrament, and by the testimony of the community of believers. Word and sacrament and community have the power to restore our perseverance at times of discouragement because they enable us to see for ourselves the new Life that is being offered us.

Though we cannot see Jesus now in the same way as the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we do encounter him. We must choose to persevere in looking for him, in seeking the kind of new experiences that shake us out of our unbelief into grasping the new insight and new Life that the risen One offers. Perseverance matters!

### Living the Paschal Mystery

No wonder the early church from the very beginning chose the first day of the week for breaking bread—celebrating Eucharist. This is why, for us, Eucharist—"breaking of bread"—is so pivotal; here we encounter the risen Jesus, share in his meal, and become ourselves the risen Presence for others. Here we engage the dying and rising that is the pattern of our everyday living. Here we engage the mystery of salvation so powerfully that we are shaken out of our limited vision and begin to see ourselves and others as God sees us. Others in our faith community reflect back to us the reality that Jesus is alive and among us, because he is within us. The vision of others, their deep faith, their caring and sharing are all recognizable signs that "The Lord has truly been raised." We must persevere in our belief.

## Focusing the Gospel

**Key words and phrases:** two of Jesus' disciples were going to . . . Emmaus, Jesus himself drew near, he interpreted . . . the Scriptures, he took bread . . . and gave it to them, returned to Jerusalem, The Lord has truly been raised

**To the point:** The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had given up on "Jesus the Nazarene" as the "one to redeem Israel." But the risen Jesus searched them out, walked with them, broke bread with them. Their encounter led to an overwhelming transformation moving them from unbelief to belief. Further, after returning to Jerusalem, their newfound belief is confirmed by a community who attests that "The Lord has truly been raised." We must choose this same journey today, over and over again: encounter the risen Jesus, come to deeper belief, witness to others his risen Presence.

## Connecting the Gospel

**to the first reading:** Peter's proclamation to the people of Jerusalem uses Scripture to unpack the story of Jesus, just as Jesus does the same with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus.

**to experience:** We listen more intently to conversations that pique our curiosity than to conversations that don't matter to us. No doubt, the two disciples on the way to Emmaus had their curiosity piqued by this Stranger who joined their conversation. They listened so intently that they came to believe.

## Connecting the Responsorial Psalm

**to the readings:** Psalm 16 is more than an argument Peter draws from the Old Testament to prove the resurrection (first reading). It is our profession of faith that the same Life after death granted Jesus will be given to us. Each of us, too, "abides in confidence" that God will not "abandon [our] soul to the underworld" or our bodies to "corruption." The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of our own hope (second reading).

Nonetheless, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we struggle with doubts and misunderstandings about the mystery of the resurrection (gospel). The gospel shows us the many ways Christ comes to keep us walking along the "path to life"—in prayer and conversation, in reflection on Scripture, in the breaking of the bread. In Psalm 16 we proclaim these are not chance encounters but the concrete and constant ways God shows us the "path of life."

**to psalmist preparation:** In this responsorial psalm you acknowledge that God shows you the "path of life." The gospel reveals that this path is one of personal encounter with Christ who leads you through Scripture, Eucharist, and prayerful conversation to faith in his resurrection. When and how do you encounter Christ in these ways? Who helps you see and hear him? How in singing this psalm can you help the assembly see and hear him?

## ASSEMBLY & FAITH-SHARING GROUPS

- The kind of conversing that leaves me with a heavy heart like the disciples on the road to Emmaus is . . . The kind of conversation that leads my heart to burn within me is . . .
- The risen Jesus walks with me when . . . he says to me . . .
- I find it easiest to witness my belief in the risen Jesus when . . . to . . . by . . .

## PRESIDERS

I best lead my people on the journey of encountering the risen Jesus, believing in

## Third Sunday of Easter, April 30, 2017

### Gospel (cont.)

Luke 24:13-35; L46A

But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place.

Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive.

Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see."

And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

Then they said to each other,

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?"

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together

the eleven and those with them who were saying,

"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two recounted

what had taken place on the way

and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.