

Reflections on the Gospel

EMMAUS IS OUR STORY

A feature of the resurrection stories in the Gospels is the way in which the risen Lord appears to people exactly as they are: to the disciples in their fear, to Mary Magdalene in her sorrow, to Thomas in his doubting. The encounter told in today's Gospel is no exception. Jesus appears to two disciples in their bitter disillusionment and loss of hope.

By not revealing himself to them immediately but simply accompanying them as a fellow traveller, the Lord respects their experience, letting them tell their story to the end. Only then does he pick it up and weave it into his own instruction. He shows them how the recent events in Jerusalem had followed the path indicated for the Messiah in the Scriptures, rather than that of Israel's political liberation that had been central to their own messianic hope.

Captivated by this companion, the disciples constrain him to be their guest. But once indoors, a reversal takes place: they, who had offered hospitality to him, find themselves guests at a table he provides. The Eucharistic gestures at the breaking of the bread reveal him at last as risen Lord.

Instantly, he vanishes from their sight, and they hurry back to Jerusalem to share with the other disciples their experience of the risen Lord.

This wonderful story perfectly models the life of the Church. Fortified by the Spirit, the Church continues through Word and Sacrament the mission of the Lord. It walks alongside disillusioned, hurt humanity, expounding the Scriptures, and in the Eucharist provides the hospitality of God.

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