

**THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER; Cycle – A; April 18<sup>th</sup> 2026**  
**Acts 2: 22-33; 1 Peter 1: 17-21; Luke 24: 13-35**

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

During the Easter Season the gospels give us the detailed account of the apparition of Jesus to his disciples. In Luke we have just listened to the first appearance of Jesus to his two disciples who were not part of the twelve. We see two disciples, sad and confused, going back to their village after the Passover Celebration in Jerusalem. They were grieving over the tragic death of their Master. On that Sunday morning the sadness gave way to confusion due to the story of the women who witnessed the empty tomb and the announcement of the angel on the Resurrection of Jesus. The women told the story to the apostles, but Luke says, **“But their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them.” (Luke 24:11)**. In this context the overwhelmed disciples could not see anything beyond their hurts and wounds.

It is said that at one point Jesus joined the pair but they didn't recognize him. It could be for two reasons that they failed to recognize; first of all they never expected him to walk with them; secondly, they could not recognize him due to the overwhelming sadness and disappointment. They were expressing their sorrow to Jesus thinking that he was a stranger. They said, **“We were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel!”** These are the words of people whose hopes are dead and dreams are shattered. Now those expectations were in vain. But when Jesus came and walked with them and opened the Word of God to them, their hearts started throbbing once again and eventually the darkness of disappointment and sadness turned into light. And only in Jesus they could find once again what life meant.

When Cleopas and his companion speak about their sadness, naturally we are drawn into the depth of their sadness and we feel that it is our story. This gospel passage is often used in spiritual direction or as a focus for personal meditation. When people find themselves enduring their own painful times, this gospel story gives hope to all who happen to say, **“I was hoping, but...”** We all have such moments of disappointment, “I was hoping...” This story draws our attention whenever we believe that God has turned His back on us; this story is consoling when we too travel through the dark evening of our life without much to hope for and dream of.

Many of you are familiar with the popular poem, **'The footprints in the sand,'** which narrates the story of God walking with me always, but in my most difficult moments he carries me on his shoulder. There isn't any moment when Jesus will abandon us. He says to his disciples in Matthew 28: 20, **"And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."** In our Emmaus journey Jesus walks with us, though we fail to recognize him. Like the two disciples, we too may believe that we are walking with a stranger. It is said that when they invited the stranger to stay with them that night and were ready to share their bread, they recognized Jesus. And Luke says, **"They opened their eyes and recognized him."** **This same phrase 'opened the eyes' occurs six times in the Acts of the Apostles which always referred to a deeper understanding of revelation.** If they had not invited the stranger, perhaps, they would not have got the opportunity to recognize Jesus at all.

In our lives too Jesus may be walking with us in disguise and if we too can invite him to join us definitely he will reveal to us. The risen Christ will never leave us in our sufferings and sadness, rather accompanies us in all these. **When Cleopas and companion listened to the Word of God and shared their bread with Jesus, their eyes were opened and they could see Jesus.** We may say, "What a privilege was it for the two disciples on the road to Emmaus! When we hear the **Word of God we hear it with our ears and understand it with our minds. Here the Holy Spirit starts working within us to allow the Word of God to heal and renew us. That is what happened in the lives of those two disciples. On this altar Jesus breaks the Bread for us, means he gives us his Body and Blood.** Naturally, then our eyes are also opened to see Jesus standing with us.