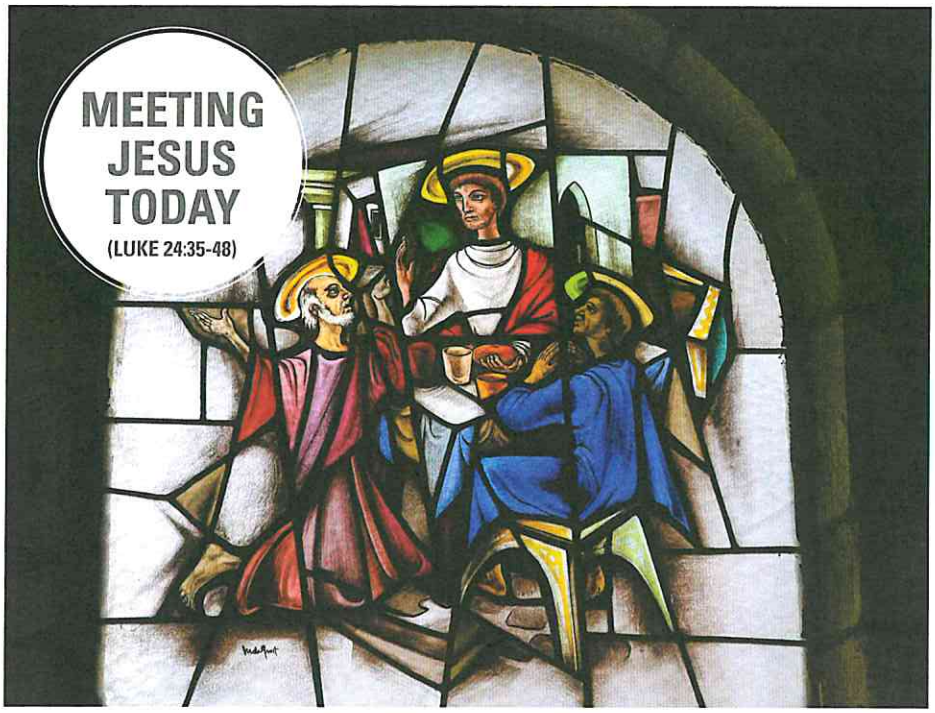
18 APRIL 2021

Sunday Message

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 3



Stained glass window in the fifteenth-century Elzenveld Chapel in Antwerp, Belgium, depicting Jesus and two disciples at Emmaus

Our Gospel passage follows the encounter of the two disciples with the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus and his making himself known to them in a setting with a Eucharistic background.

The episode today echoes last Sunday's reading from John, in which Jesus makes himself present to the group of disciples in Jerusalem. Cleopas and his possibly female companion have to return to the holy city, because that is the place where God's plan of redemption is to be worked out and, as yet, it is not completed: that will come with Pentecost.

The appearance of Jesus emphasises that he is the same person as was crucified and laid in the tomb. The detail that he ate the piece of grilled fish "before their eyes" is an indication that the disciples are authentic witnesses to the resurrection: it is the same Jesus whom they knew before the crucifixion, but now he is transformed; he is not a ghost or a resuscitated corpse. The mention of fish recalls the feeding of the five thousand, which has Eucharistic overtones.

The risen Jesus then "opened their minds to understand the scriptures", another Eucharistic allusion. The earlier Emmaus episode shows the importance of the Hebrew scriptures in making sense of the story of Jesus. Here the same message is reinforced, underlining that the paschal event is part of God's plan.

Luke's Gospel narrative of Jesus is set in the context of a journey with Jerusalem as its focus: Jesus now tells the disciples that Jerusalem will become the hub from which the preaching of the Gospel will radiate out to the whole world. But not quite yet: the Holy Spirit will be the driving force and the Spirit has still to come. ■

REFLECT

Luke is concerned to show that the risen Jesus is present when his disciples gather together to share a meal in his memory. The essential elements in this celebration are setting what happened to Jesus in the context of the Hebrew scriptures and the breaking of bread.

In our Sunday readings, the first reading and the Gospel are thematically linked: sometimes the connection is more obvious than on other occasions, but the fundamental point remains, that the Gospels can only be fully understood against the background of what we usually call the Old Testament. A homily is an explanation of the scripture readings: a sermon is more of a class or lecture on some specific point of church teaching. It is an interesting point from the Emmaus story that Cleopas and his companion are homilising as they make their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They are focused on Jesus and what happened to him, but, without the Hebrew scriptures, this remains an insoluble puzzle. The same message is forcefully conveyed in today's passage.

There is much more interest now in Catholic circles in the study of the Bible: a version with cross-references in the margin is a great help in making the links between Gospel passages and their Hebrew counterparts. ■

LEARN

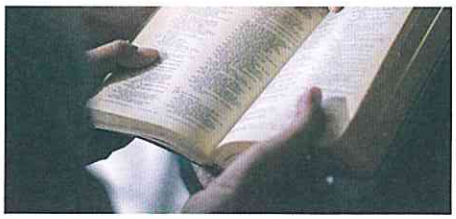
In the Bible, people never discover God: God always reveals Godself.

The official teaching of the Catholic Church places the scriptures in the context of God's self-revelation as the Word of God.

The liturgy of the word is an essential element in the celebration of the Eucharist and of equal importance to the sacramental part.

DO

Look up the references to the Jewish scriptures in some Sunday Gospel passage. See if this helps your understanding of the reading and, more importantly, of the person of Jesus.



SAY

The word of our God remains for ever. (Isaiah 40:8)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.**

GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.**

**We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

COLLECT

May your people exult for ever, O God,
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,
we may look forward in confident hope
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING — Acts 3:13-15. 17-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter said to the people: "You are Israelites, and it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant Jesus, the same Jesus you handed over and then disowned in the presence of Pilate, after Pilate had decided to release him. It was you who accused the Holy One, the Just One, you who demanded the reprieve of a murderer while you killed the prince of life. God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are the witnesses.

"Now I know, brothers, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing; this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM — Psalm 4

Response:
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.
or
Alleluia!

1. When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have mercy and hear me! **(R.)**

2. It is the Lord who grants favours to those whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him. **(R.)**

3. "What can bring us happiness?" many say.
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord. **(R.)**

4. I will lie down in peace and sleep comes at once,
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in safety. **(R.)**

SECOND READING — 1 John 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St John.

I am writing this, my children,
to stop you sinning;
but if anyone should sin,
we have our advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ, who is just;
he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away,
and not only ours,
but the whole world's.
We can be sure that we know God
only by keeping his commandments.
Anyone who says, "I know him",
and does not keep his commandments,
is a liar,
refusing to admit the truth.
But when anyone does obey what he has said,
God's love comes to perfection in him.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL — Luke 24:35-48

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread.

They were still talking about this when Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they could not believe it, and they stood dumbfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes.

Then he told them, "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, has to be fulfilled." He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

(all bow during the next two lines)

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, we pray,
these offerings of your exultant Church,
and, as you have given her cause for such great gladness,
grant also that the gifts we bring
may bear fruit in perpetual happiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The Christ had to suffer and on the third day rise from the dead;
in his name repentance and remission of sins must be preached to all the nations, alleluia.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look with kindness upon your people,
O Lord,
and grant, we pray,
that those you were pleased to renew by eternal mysteries
may attain in their flesh
the incorruptible glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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