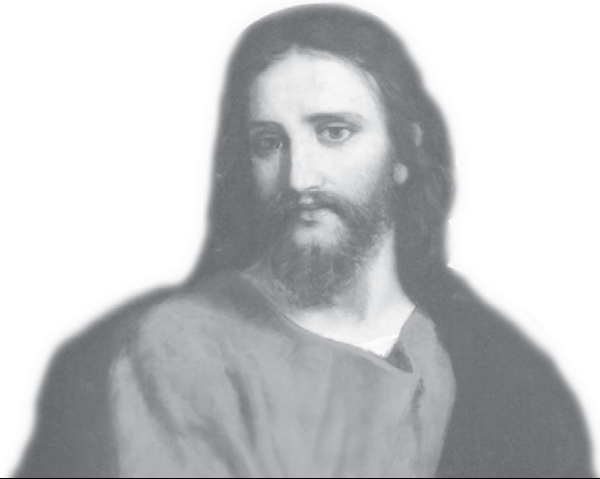


# DISCOVER

## the Joy of Christ



### “What happens when you encounter the risen Christ?”

Two followers of Jesus left Jerusalem and were walking to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles away. The passage from the Gospel of Luke tells us that these individuals were dejected to the point of losing hope, and understandably so, because of the crucifixion and death of Jesus on the cross. And yet, everything changed through a personal encounter with the risen Christ.

As these two disciples walked along, they discussed the things that had taken place in Jerusalem. While they conversed, Jesus came up alongside them and walked with them. However, they did not recognize Him.

Jesus asked them what they were talking about, and they came to a sudden standstill, looking sad. One of them essentially said, *You can't be serious! Haven't you heard about the amazing teacher and miracle worker, Jesus of Nazareth, who was condemned to death and crucified?* “But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see” (Luke 24:21-24).

Jesus continued to walk along with the two disciples and listened patiently. He understood their “crisis of faith.” All seemed to have failed since the Messiah had been crucified. And so Our Lord explained to them everything that concerned Himself since the time of Moses, how on the basis of the Scriptures, the Messiah had to suffer and die to achieve His glory, winning the victory over Satan, sin, and death. As the two came to Emmaus, Jesus seemed to be going further but they begged Him to stay with them as it was now evening, even though they still did not recognize Him.

Jesus accepted their invitation to stay and as He was at table with them, “He took the bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized Him” (Luke 24:30-31). Jesus was alive! The disciples raced back to Jerusalem, running

the seven miles in the dark, barely able to contain their excitement and joy to tell the Apostles that they had encountered the risen Christ.

This encounter of prayer in walking with Jesus, conversing with Him and receiving Him in the Holy Eucharist changed everything. Two people who were dejected to the point of losing hope were now filled with confidence and peace. They were so animated that they said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32).

In our daily lives, each one of us can experience a similar journey to Emmaus. We face difficulties and sorrows that seem insurmountable, causing our hope to fade. We may be confronted with a “crisis of faith” comparable to those disciples. But on life's journey, Jesus walks alongside us. He desires to explain everything that we want to know. In order to be aware of His presence, we need to set aside time for silence each day, seeking Jesus and being open to His guidance through the Scriptures.

The account of the Road to Emmaus parallels the structure of the Mass. First we hear the Scriptures that point to Christ and stir our hearts. Then we meet Him in the breaking of the Bread, Holy Communion. Let us come each Sunday and be part of the parish community, contemplating the Scripture passages ahead of time, and then hearing the readings and the explanation of what they mean at Mass. We will then be more prepared to receive the risen Christ and to recognize He is truly with us and within us.

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