

Luke 24:13-35^{vi}

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed 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 they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then

their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

v About the Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

The two disciples on the way to Emmaus share the popular view of Jesus as a prophet and point to the hope that Jesus was in fact the expected prophet-like-Moses. Comprehension begins with the interpretation of the scriptures, which pointed toward the suffering and glory of the Messiah. The power of the word of God prepared them to receive the broken bread in full recognition of Jesus. The post-resurrection table fellowship with Jesus links the feeding during his early ministry and the pledge at the Last Supper with the Eucharistic experiences of the early Church. Although Jesus' physical presence is withdrawn, his self-revelation in scripture and his manifestation in the Eucharist remain. The pattern of word and sacrament in the story becomes that of the Christian liturgy and life.

vi Reflection and Response

As Cleopas and his companion walk toward Emmaus, they ache with an enormous void. It is a measure of Jesus' vibrant personality that his death creates such emptiness. Clearly he was no shadow who passed unnoticed through the disciples' lives. His exchange with these disciples bears the marks of honest speech: it is blunt, the language of rough roads, not the polite conversation of cocktail parties. They address him like the village idiot: "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" (Luke 24:18). He responds in kind: "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart..." (Luke 24:25). Not much political correctness here!

There is also a gradual shift in images. As Jesus interprets the scriptures, the disciples start to forget the bloody face and the bruised corpse. They are drawn into a clear understanding of the prophets and the necessity for Jesus' suffering. Their hearts burn again, this time not with the persistent ache, but

with the joy of recognizing the risen Lord. After an exhausting seven-mile trudge, they are energized to repeat their steps: without resting, they return to Jerusalem, their feet barely touching the ground. Father Frank Sokol finds in their story a paradigm for us all. Jesus' question, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" (Luke 24:17) translates to "What are your daily concerns?" Jesus then injects this ordinary stuff with divine light. He shows them how scripture has direct bearing on their present sorrow and he reveals himself in the breaking of bread.

The disciples model the Christian response by offering hospitality to the hungry, homeless stranger late at night. In the stranger, they then discover the face of Christ. We, too, hearing the gospel, ask ourselves, what does it call us to do? The roads we travel, like the one to Emmaus, are holy paths.