

When the Lord Jesus walked with Cleopas and the other disciple on the way to Emmaus on Easter Sunday, He chided them for their lack of faith. “How foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe!”

How slow of heart to believe. Are we slow of heart to believe?

To believe in God means to trust Him completely. We humble ourselves before the One in Whom we believe. We are all of us defenseless children, before the One in Whom we believe.

When we believe in God, we fulfill ourselves. He made us in His image and likeness. If we put our deepest trust in anyone or anything else, other than God, we will be betrayed. But if we love God with childlike hearts, we find the solid bedrock of absolutely reliable Truth.

If we are not foolish and slow of heart, we believe not just in God, but also in the Christ of God. We believe in the Son sent by the heavenly Father. By virtue of our faith in God, we can behold Christ, our brother, for Who He truly is: the eternal Son of the eternal Father, our divine Savior.

The Christ offered Himself, in the sacrifice of pure divine love, for our sakes, on the cross. He rose from the dead. And He took His seat in the glory of heaven, where He reigns as High Priest and King. We do not hesitate to trust this King of Love, and to rely on Him completely.

We have to. We need Him. We need air, food, and a roof over our heads. We need Jesus Christ more.

Not only that. We Christian believers, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread. Faith in Almighty God. Faith in God's Son, the Christ. Faith in the Mass.

The Church did not make up the Mass; Christ made up the Mass, and by doing so, He made the Church. The Church did not make up the sacred priesthood; Christ made up the sacred priesthood, and by doing so, He made the Church. The Church did not say 'This is my Body,' and 'This is my Blood;' Christ said 'This is my Body,' and 'This is my Blood,' and by doing so, He made the Church.

Lord Jesus gathered His Apostles, entrusting His divine Body and Blood to them by His infallible words, and then He offered that same Body and Blood on the cross. His own words make clear the inseparable connection between the Mass and the cross: "This is my Body, *which will be given up for you;*" "This is my Blood, *which will be shed for you.*"

In other words, to believe in the Mass is to believe in the Redemption, and to believe in the Redemption is to believe in the Holy Mass. The Mass and the redeeming sacrifice of Jesus ARE THE SAME THING. The Church

did not make this up; Christ made this up, and in doing so, He made the Church.

The dejected disciples on the road to Emmaus did not understand the Holy Eucharist that Jesus had instituted. They thought that Jesus' condemnation and death involved a terrible tragedy. They didn't realize that it was a religious sacrifice, that it was THE sacrifice of divine love. They thought their beloved rabbi had suffered a crushing defeat. They didn't realize that, on the cross, love triumphed. Jesus gave Himself to the Father, for us, with perfect love.

Pope St. John Paul II put it like this: "The sacrifice of our redemption is so decisive for the human race that Jesus Christ offered it and returned to the Father only after he had left us a means of sharing in it, as if we had been present there." Namely, the Holy Mass.

So: No, not foolish or slow of heart to believe. No. We believe! We believe in God. We believe in Christ. We believe in the Mass. And we long, with everything we have, to unite again at the holy altar.