

1st Wednesday of Easter. 4/7/2021

They recognized him in the breaking of the bread

Accepting the resurrection, the new reality of the risen Jesus, was not something automatic for the disciples. It was a process to go from the darkness of sorrow and guilt to the light of joy for Christ's triumph over death and the dawn of a new creation. A gradual understanding of the new state of things with a gradual commitment and fidelity to the kingdom of salvation established by Christ.

The story of the two disciples, in our Gospel reading, shows us how the resurrected Jesus enters and transforms the lives of his followers.

The disciples had gone through intense days in Jerusalem, leading to the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. We lived

some of those feelings during Holy Week, listening to the teaching of Jesus about service, then the betrayal and arrest, the injustice of his trial and condemnation, and finally his killing in the hands of the Roman soldiers.

These were difficult days in Jerusalem. After Jesus dies in the cross, they feel tired, sad, powerless, angry, confused, disappointed, at the sight of everything that was destroyed those days. They feel some guilt as well, as they were overcome by fear and didn't stand up to the injustice.

So, they leave Jerusalem. It has been too much, so they are walking out, getting away. Emmaus is the place we go to forget about all that is going wrong in the world.

On the way they talk about the events. This is not what they expected. This mighty prophet, Jesus, was the one to redeem Israel, but instead he has been killed by the Romans. Where did things go wrong?

And in their journey they are joined by a stranger, who doesn't seem to know or understand all that has happened, so they bring him up to date. But it is this stranger who has the vantage point.

As the disciples open to him and offer him hospitality, he makes present God's revelation and helps them see that this is really God's plan for redemption. The disciples are changed from the inside, and their hearts burn as they come to understand that this suffering was necessary for Christ to enter into his Glory.

As their attitude and convictions have transformed and are now aligned with God's, they are finally able to recognize Christ in the breaking of the bread. And they go back to Jerusalem, energized and strengthened to proclaim the joy of the resurrection, and to follow Christ in community.

The Easter season started over the weekend, with the joyful celebration of the Easter Vigil. We have 50 days set apart to **meditate** on the resurrection of Christ and to open our hearts anew to the new life he gained for all men and women. In the Mass today, let us be open to the presence of Christ resurrected, and let him transform us from the inside, so that our actions can reflect the joy of the new life that he has brought to the world by his resurrection.