

# Sunday, April 30, 2017

## Third Sunday of Easter

### Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

#### Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Acts 2:1-14, 22-33

2nd Reading: 1:17-21

Responsorial: Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

### Knowing Jesus More Deeply through Reading and Reflecting on Scriptures

*Their eyes were opened and they recognized him.* (Luke 24:31)

Don't you wish you could have been there when Cleopas and his friend were walking to Emmaus? Wouldn't it have been exciting to hear Jesus interpreting the Scriptures and to see the look in their eyes when they recognized him in the breaking of the bread?

Well, in a sense, we can be there. Even today, two thousand years after his resurrection, Jesus' word can cause our hearts to burn and bring us to the place where we recognize him. How is this possible? Because the Scriptures do more than teach us about Jesus—they reveal him to us!

As many times as we hear the Scriptures read at Mass, it's good to be reminded that they aren't just words on a page. As St. Paul taught, they are "living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Inspired by God, they are filled with his presence. They have the Spirit's own power to bring us his wisdom, peace, and joy. All it takes is listening with faith.

Cleopas and his friend had to walk a long way with Jesus before they recognized him, and sometimes we do too. So be patient with yourself. When you hear the Scriptures proclaimed at Mass, try to imagine that you are there in the middle of the action—in Galilee, in Jerusalem, or wherever the story takes place. Imagine that you can hear Jesus speaking to you. Put aside distractions, and listen for what he may want to say to you personally.

You may not "hear" anything right away. You may not hear anything at all! But that's okay because the Holy Spirit is still at work in you, just as he was working with the Emmaus disciples every step of their journey. He is always pouring out his grace, even when you can't feel it. All you have to do is try your best to keep an open heart. Over time, you will recognize him.

*"Holy Spirit, help me to recognize Jesus in his word today. Lord, let your word touch my heart so that you can use me for your glory!"*

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission. For more information on how to subscribe to their devotional magazine, go to [www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)).

**Sunday, April 30, 2017**

***Questions for Reflection or Discussion:***

1. In the first reading from Acts, Peter gives a powerful proclamation of the Gospel message, including quoting an Old Testament prophecy regarding the resurrection of Jesus (from Psalm 16).
  - Where did Peter, in spite of being an uneducated fisherman, get such a gift? (Hint: see Acts 2:33.)
  - If we believe that we as baptized Catholics have the ability to proclaim the Gospel through the power of the Spirit that dwells in us, what keeps us from sharing it with others? How can you overcome some of these obstacles?
2. The responsorial psalm begins with these words: “Keep me, O God, for in you I take refuge; I say to the LORD, ‘My Lord are you.’ O LORD, my allotted portion and my cup, you it is who hold fast my lot. I bless the LORD who counsels me; even in the night my heart exhorts me. I set the LORD ever before me.”
  - In what ways do these words allow the psalmist to keep his mind and heart fixed on the Lord?
  - In what ways do these words bear fruit for the psalmist, so he can also proclaim: “with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed”?
  - What steps can you take to keep your heart and mind fixed on the Lord by turning to him more often during the day, even in the midst of your busyness?
3. The 2nd reading opens as follows: “Beloved: If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially according to each one's works, conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning, realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct, handed on by your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb.”
  - Why would knowing that “you were ransomed from your futile conduct . . . with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:17-19), help you to “conduct yourself with reverence”?
  - Do you believe that reflecting more on the fact that “you were ransomed from your futile conduct . . . with the precious blood of Christ” will help you to “conduct yourself with reverence”? Why or why not? Any examples?
4. The Gospel reading describes the Emmaus Road meeting with Jesus by two of his disciples after his resurrection. During this encounter, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures.”
  - Why do you think that in spite of all that Jesus said to them on the road to Emmaus, the disciples still did not recognize him?
  - Why do you believe that it was not until Jesus “took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them” that “he was made known to them”? (Hint: in the early Church “breaking of bread” was a term for the Eucharist.)
5. The meditation opens with these words: “Don’t you wish you could have been there when Cleopas and his friend were walking to Emmaus? Wouldn’t it have been exciting to hear Jesus interpreting the Scriptures and to see the look in their eyes when they recognized him in the breaking of the bread? Well, in a sense, we can be there. Even today, two thousand years after his resurrection, Jesus’ word can cause our hearts to burn and bring us to the place where we recognize him. How is this possible? Because the Scriptures do more than teach us about Jesus—they reveal him to us!”
  - Knowing that Scriptures are “living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12), are you willing to spend time, prior to the start of Mass, reflecting on the Mass readings? If not, why not?
  - Do you believe that if you do, perhaps, like the Emmaus Road disciples, your heart will burn as the Scriptures are read and explained at Mass?
  - Are you also willing to spend time each day reading and reflecting on Scriptures (e.g., the daily mass readings)?
6. Take some time now and pray that as you faithfully spend time reading Scriptures, you would recognize Jesus more deeply and would experience his transforming power. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

***“Holy Spirit, help me to recognize Jesus in his word today. Lord, let your word touch my heart so that you can use me for your glory!”***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is also a member of the **National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal** (<http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org/>) and a member of the board of

directors of the **Christlife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization** (<https://christlife.org/>). Maurice was also the founding Executive Director of the **National Fellowship of Catholic Men**. He can be contacted at [mblumberg@wau.org](mailto:mblumberg@wau.org) or [mblumberg@aol.com](mailto:mblumberg@aol.com).]