

On this 3rd Sunday of Easter we are called to experience the Risen Christ and deepen our faith. In the First Reading we see the fearless proclamation of Peter to the people of Jerusalem about Risen Jesus of whom he was witness. This message of Peter was a call to penance and conversion. On behalf of God, it was a message of love, mercy and forgiveness. Addressing some of those who had killed Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, Peter expressed that the Lord would forgive them if they had a change of heart. In the Second Peter reminds the Christians that Jesus through his blood has paid the ransom for us and the saving hope is given to us. He tells that all our faith and hope as believers are centered on this mystery of the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Gospel we have the beautiful story of two disciples walking with Risen Jesus on the road to a village called Emmaus. It was the day of the Resurrection, but these two wandering disciples did not grasp the entire situation. The cruel death of Jesus completely shook them. They were totally perplexed and confused and their hope was shattered. Disbelief has overpowered them. They were leaving Jerusalem and its disturbing events, because, for them, Jesus' death was an unmitigated tragedy. As they themselves were dejected and disillusioned at this time they chose to discuss the terrible events of the past few days with him.

During their walk the Risen Lord appeared to them and conversed with them explaining to them what was said in the scriptures concerning himself from beginning with Moses and all the Prophets but they did not recognize him. But later that day, when he was at table with them, while he broke the bread, they recognized him. They invited him to stay with them - **“Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.”** Without Jesus there is a real darkness is there in the disciples. And as they sit at table, the stranger becomes the host and Master. In the breaking of the bread they recognize Jesus. In the Eucharist Jesus indeed continues to stay with us.

The journey of the two disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus symbolizes the life journey of our faith. It stands as a symbol for the whole Christian life as we are called a *'pilgrim people,'* always on the march to our heavenly home. We need, however, to realize that we are never alone in our life's journey. He is with us all the time and in all situations. But, as happened with the two disciples, we at times feel he has abandoned us, he has let us down, he no longer cares. We need to be ready to recognize him entering our lives so that we can respond appropriately to him. Our lives may be crowded with duties and customs and routines; our minds, full of disappointments; our consciences, depressed, with sins. There seems little room for hope in all this. All that we need to do is to invite Jesus to stay with us as the apostles invited the stranger into their home. As he walked along with them he entered their lives where they were, namely, in their distress. That is the point where we too should go to meet Jesus. We can have him as a guest in our homes. Jesus always wants to meet us where we are, not where we would like to be or where we think we ought to be. He comes to us in ordinary life situations, but he never forces himself on us. Jesus speaks to us and is truly present in the Scriptures and in the Eucharist. Jesus as Word and Eucharist is our food for our pilgrimage to our true home. In the breaking of bread he unites the Christian community into his Body and also keeps his promise to be with us till the end of time. Amen.