

## April 30, 2017: Sunday Homily on Luke 24:13-35

Our Scripture lessons for today have one common, encouraging theme: **No matter what happens in our lives, the risen Jesus is always with us. God is always near to those who seek Him and who want to live in His presence, doing His will.**

The first reading, from Acts, is taken from the beginning of Peter's first public proclamation about Jesus and how God raised Jesus from death, thus fulfilling the Messianic prophecies about the promised descendant of David. In the second reading, Peter exhorts the early Christians to place their Faith and Hope in God Who has saved them through the precious Blood of His Son and who has raised Jesus from the dead. The Emmaus incident described in today's Gospel is the story of a God who will not leave us alone when we are hurt and disappointed. The message of today's Scripture readings is that the followers of Jesus are to maintain contact with their Risen Lord through the Eucharist and the Bible. The readings also remind us that our belief in Jesus' presence in the consecrated Bread and Wine should help us to understand better his presence in the Bible and in the believing and worshipping community. Putting the two appearances (to the Emmaus disciples and to Peter), together, it is clear that the risen Jesus wanted Peter to act as spokesman for him and that the faithful who seek to follow Jesus should seek his company in the Eucharist and in the Bible under the direction of Peter and his successors.

1) Jesus meets us on our Emmaus Road. The risen Lord meets us on the road to our Emmaus in the ordinary experiences of our lives and in the places to which we retreat when life is too much for us. We, too, have hopes and dreams about better health, healing, financial security and better family relationships. These often get shattered. **The story promises us, however, that**

**Jesus will come to us in unfamiliar guises to support and strengthen us when we least expect the risen Lord.** Emmaus moments come to us when we meet the risen Christ on our life's journey through rough times.

2) We meet Jesus on a daily basis in our life's journey. The Church instructs us to hear Jesus on a daily basis through the faithful reading of, and meditation on, the Bible and to experience Jesus through our participation in the Eucharistic celebration where the risen Lord gives himself to us, through our personal and family prayers and through our family meals. When we meet Jesus through the Word of God, we commune with him. We renew our relationship with Jesus through prayer. These two meetings will enable us to meet the risen Jesus living in all the people we meet and to offer them humble, loving and selfless service.

3) Do our hearts burn when we listen to the risen Lord in the Bible? Christ comes to us most clearly in the Word. Vatican II (*Dei Verbum* 21) tells us that Jesus is to be equally venerated in the Eucharist and in the Bible. Therefore, we need to study the Bible, learn the Bible, memorize the Bible, meditate on the word of God with burning zeal and practice what the Bible teaches.

1) **Risen Lord in the train.** On her first train trip, a little girl was put into an upper berth by her mother. The mother then assured her that Jesus would watch over her during the night. As the lights were switched off the girl became alarmed and called out softly: "Mom, are you there?" "Yes dear," her mother replied. A little later the child called in a louder voice: "Daddy, are you also there?" "Yes", was the reply. After this had been repeated several times, one of the passengers lost patience and shouted: "We're all here. Your father, your mother, your brothers and sisters and cousins, your uncles and aunts – all are here. Now go to sleep!"

There was silence for a while. Then, in a hushed voice the child asked: "Mom, was that risen Jesus traveling with us?"

**2) Where is God?**-A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. They were always getting into trouble and their parents knew that if any mischief occurred in their neighborhood their sons were probably involved. The boys' mother heard that a priest in the downtown parish had been successful in disciplining children, so she asked if he would speak with her boys. The pastor agreed, but asked to see them individually. So the mother sent her 8-year-old first, in the morning, and fixed the appointment of the older boy with the priest in the afternoon. The priest, a huge man with a booming voice, sat the younger boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is God?" The boy's mouth dropped open and he made no response. So the priest repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God!!?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer. So the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face and bellowed, "WHERE IS GOD!?" The boy screamed and ran directly home and dove into his closet, slamming the door behind him. When his older brother found him in the closet, he asked, "What happened?" The younger brother, gasping for breath, replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time, Dave. God is missing - and they think WE did it!"