

FROM MERCY TO MISSION

April 19, 2026 | Third Sunday of Easter



John 24: 13 – 35

That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

Opening Prayer

Draw us forth, God of all creation.
Draw us forward and away from
limited certainty into the immense
world of your love. Give us the capacity
to even for a moment taste the
richness of the feast you give us.
Give us the peace to live with
uncertainty, with questions, with
doubts. Help us to experience the
resurrection anew with open wonder
and an increasing ability to see you in
the people of Easter. Amen.

Call to Action (*Choose One*)

- **Scripture** → Spend 10 minutes with a Gospel passage and ask: "Jesus, what are You showing me?"
- **Eucharist** → Attend Mass or Adoration and pray: "Jesus, help me recognize You." Stay a few extra minutes in silence.
- **Witness** → Reach out to one person this week and share encouragement or something God is doing in your life.

From Confusion → Encounter → Recognition → Witness

Two disciples walk away from Jerusalem carrying confusion, disappointment, and unanswered questions. Jesus comes alongside them—but they don't recognize Him.

That might surprise us, but it shouldn't. The risen Jesus is not always immediately recognizable. He often meets us quietly—in our conversations, our struggles, and even in the moments when we feel like we're walking in the wrong direction.

Everything begins to change when Jesus opens the Scriptures. Suddenly, what once felt confusing starts to make sense. Later, the disciples reflect, "Were not our hearts burning within us?" Jesus doesn't just explain things intellectually—He speaks to the heart. He is not a distant teacher, but a lover revealing meaning from within a relationship.

Then comes the turning point: the breaking of the bread. In that moment, their eyes are opened—they recognize Him. This is not just their story. It is ours. Every time we gather for the Eucharist, Jesus is present in the same way—revealing Himself in Scripture and made known in the breaking of the bread. And just like the disciples, we are not meant to stay where we are. After recognizing Him, they immediately return to Jerusalem to share the good news.

That is the movement of discipleship: from encounter to witness. Jesus does not come to free us merely from external struggles, but from something deeper—sin, which binds the heart and separates us from God. True freedom is not just changing our circumstances; it is healing our relationship with Him. And once we experience that freedom, that encounter, that recognition—we are sent.

This week, pay attention: Where might Jesus already be walking with you? And how is He inviting you—not just to recognize Him—but to go and share Him?

Discussion Questions

- Where do you see Jesus walking alongside you right now, even if you didn't recognize Him at first?
- What helps you move from just "knowing about" Jesus to actually encountering Him personally?
- The disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread. How has the Eucharist (or could the Eucharist) become more real or meaningful in your life?
- What is one way God "lit something up" or made your heart burn within you recently, helping something make sense in your life or faith?
- The disciples immediately went back to share their experience. Who is one person you feel called to reach out to this week and what could you share with them?