

# SUNDAY PLUS



## Recognition

A Year of the Word

# Witnesses to the truth of Christ

by Catherine Pepinster

**M**any people find having a conversation, a one-to-one, a difficult thing to do. All that focus somehow makes people shy.

Conversation during a journey can often be easier. Parents find recalcitrant teenagers easier to chat to when they're together on a car journey. Friends often say what they mean during a walk. So we can imagine here that the two disciples were saying the things they really

meant on that walk to Emmaus. They were ready to face the truth – and the one who is The Truth appeared to them. Even then it took some time for the pair to realise what was happening to them. Only at the breaking of bread – the moment that recalled the Last Supper – did they realise this stranger was Jesus. It is a Gospel story that inspires us to ask: how often do we recognise Jesus in the strangers we meet? How often do we offer others our hospitality? Do we truly

recognise him when bread is broken at Mass and we have the opportunity to receive him?

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were witnesses to the truth of Christ. Christian discipleship requires that we are all prepared to serve as witnesses to him. Being a witness is not just about speaking of God, as the disciples did on that journey, but offering service too. The service of hospitality is right here, in the centre of this account of Christ, risen from the dead.



Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of *The Tablet* and the author of *The Keys and the Kingdom – the British and the papacy from John Paul II to Francis*, published by T&T Clark.

## With open eyes

by Emerald O'Hanrahan

My now husband and I were best friends for several years before we were together. We first met working on an episode of *Casualty* and, on our second day there, we went for a walk at night. It was November and pretty cold when we passed a man sleeping rough. Without any hesitation, James took off his gloves and gave them to him. This generous action touched me and his thoughtfulness and kindness is something I've always admired. His dad used to say you can never be too kind, and it's certainly a family value I emulate now that I have been lucky enough to marry into it.

When the risen Jesus ate with his disciples, they experienced the gift of seeing him as he really was. In my everyday life, it's something so beautiful but so easy to take for granted: the gift of being shown someone as they really are.

Emerald O'Hanrahan is an actress and voice-over artist, perhaps best known for playing Emma Grundy in *The Archers*.

**"We too often go to Sunday Mass with our worries, difficulties and disappointments... Life sometimes wounds us and we go away feeling sad, towards our 'Emmaus', turning our backs on God's plan. We distance ourselves from God... When you are down, take up the word of God and go to Sunday Mass and receive Communion... The word of God, the Eucharist: they fill us with joy."**

Pope Francis

## Our Companion on the Journey

by Sr Thérèse Garman SMP

The saddest walk we'll ever take is away from the grave of a loved one. This was true of the two disciples as they tried to make sense of their loss. Unrecognised, Jesus walks with them listening to all their pain.

Focused on their doubt, disappointment, and shattered hopes, they don't recognise Jesus. But he walks and talks with them until their eyes are opened. Do we recognise the stranger walking with us in our own sorrows and disappointments? Maybe we need to spend more time getting to know Jesus in the scriptures, listening to his words and our burning hearts as Jesus walks with us in our pain.

Asking Jesus to stay leads to a life-changing encounter. He is the guest who takes, blesses and breaks the bread and gives it to us, leading us to the Eucharistic recognition that he is no longer alongside us, but within us. He feeds us, not only with bread but also with himself, transforming our disappointments and our whole life.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence.

**Lord of life, the two disciples felt lonely, lost and discouraged until they recognised you and realised that you had not left them alone. Be with everyone who feels that they have been abandoned by someone they love. Give them hope. Give them courage. 🙏 Amen.**

**Today:**  
Acts 2:14, 22-33  
1 Peter 1:17-21  
Luke 24:13-35

**Monday:**  
Acts 6:8-15  
John 6:22-29

**Tuesday:**  
Acts 7:51 – 8:1  
John 6:30-35

**Wednesday:**  
Acts 8:1-8  
John 6:35-40

**Thursday:**  
Acts 8:26-40  
John 6:44-51

**Friday:**  
Acts 9:1-20  
John 6:52-59

**Saturday:**  
Acts 9:31-42  
John 6:60-69

**Next Sunday:**  
Acts 2:14, 36-41  
1 Peter 2:20-25  
John 10:1-10

