

Third Sunday of Easter

The road to Emmaus

INTRODUCTION

After the death of Jesus, his disciples were filled with despair and disbelief. Only days before, Jesus had been greeted by the crowds as he entered Jerusalem, and now he lay dead in a tomb. Sometimes when you feel sad or upset about something, it stops you from seeing things clearly. This is how it was for two disciples as they made their way to Emmaus early one morning.

SIGN OF THE CROSS

LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and then read:

Jesus said, 'Let your goodness shine out like a light in the darkness, so that through you, the love of our heavenly Father will touch the lives of others.' (cf *Matthew 5:16-17*)

SORRY

Ask one of the children to choose a sorry colour and read the corresponding prayer aloud together.

GLORIA

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel read the following acclamation, with the children joining in with the alleluias.

As we listen to your word, help us to shut out other thoughts and think only of you. Then as we receive the word of God may our hearts be filled with your love. Alleluia, alleluia!

GOSPEL (cf *Luke 24:13-35*)

Early one morning two disciples of Jesus were walking sadly towards a village called Emmaus. They felt totally miserable as they talked about the events of the past days, and the death of Jesus. As they walked, Jesus himself joined them, but they did not recognise him. Jesus asked them, 'What are you talking about together?' One of them answered, 'Surely you must have heard about what happened to Jesus of Nazareth! He was handed over to the chief priests and the Roman Governor who had him crucified. We believed that he was the Saviour sent by God. We have heard that his body is missing from the tomb where they laid him, but we do not know what has happened.'

Jesus said to them, 'Do you not believe what the prophets have foretold?' and he began to explain to them the prophecies about himself in the Old Testament. When they arrived at Emmaus, the disciples asked Jesus to stay and share a meal with

them. When they were at supper Jesus took some bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. At that moment they saw clearly that the stranger was in fact Jesus, but he had already disappeared from their sight. 'Of course it was the Lord,' they said, 'Remember how our hearts seemed to burn as he shared the scriptures with us. How could we have been so blind!' At once, they returned to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, and that they had known him in the breaking of the bread.

DISCUSSION

Have you ever felt really disappointed when something has gone wrong?

- you have planned a picnic but at the last moment it rains.
- a friend is coming to play but has to cancel because they are ill.
- your football team almost makes it to the top of the league and then loses all its important matches.

You can imagine then how the disciples of Jesus felt! They were terribly disappointed and depressed about his death. Everything had gone so wrong during the past few days. How could this have happened when they had seen Jesus working so many miracles?

At first, did they believe that Jesus had risen from the dead? - They knew that his body was missing from the tomb, and they did not understand the things that Jesus had said about 'rising from the dead'. They were quite sure that people did not come back to life.

What made them realise who he was? - He blessed the bread and broke it. It was his special way of sharing himself with his friends. Through sharing God's word and the breaking of bread, their eyes were 'opened' and they could 'see' clearly.

How can we know Jesus too? - Through the breaking and sharing of the Eucharist at Mass. At that moment we too recognise that Jesus is present with us.

ACTIVITY

Either give each child a copy of the illustration to colour, or make a larger picture, and after colouring add cut-out loaves etc. to the scene.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
each time we come together
to share in the breaking of bread,
help us to recognise you
and to feel our hearts burn with your love.