

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter A 2020 – A journey to Emmaus and back.

This Gospel was used at the mass on Wednesday of Easter week. It is obviously of great importance. Rather than examine the question of why the disciples, who knew Jesus very well, did not recognise him, let us reflect on the fact that their hearts burned as Jesus spoke to them about the scriptures. Would that our hearts burned whenever we heard or read scripture. What Jesus explained to the disciples was that scripture was the source of understanding all about Jesus, about his coming, his purpose, his living among us, his death and his resurrection. At the same time, Jesus clearly showed that God always keeps his promises. In reading scripture, the first question to ask is what does this tell us about God and, in the case of the Gospels and New testament, what does it tell us about Jesus? During the Easter season we read from the Acts of the Apostles which tell us how the apostles and early disciples preached the Gospel. The apostles were not theologians. They told the story of Jesus what he had said and what he had done and why. This story turned the hearts and lives of many to believe in Jesus as their Lord and Saviour. It is also evident in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Letters of the New testament that the Holy Spirit was at work overtime, gifting many with faith. The same Spirit has blessed us all with the same gift of faith and is always ready to guide and inspire our reflections. Explaining the scripture is the work of exegesis, which helps uncover the many riches dwelling in scripture that may not be obvious at first sight. The riches of scripture are infinite so there will never be a time when you will not find something new and enlightening. ***Hearts burning*** from listening to Jesus is what the Year of the Word wishes to encourage. In place of *hearts burning* we would use the word **passion** today. It was scripture that lead to St Augustine of Hippo's conversion. His heart burned for God from that moment onwards. The statue of St Augustine shows him carrying a heart with an arrow piercing it and flames rising from it and holding a bible.

St Augustine's heart was filled with a passionate love of God. The flaming heart is the human heart. It symbolizes Augustine's love of God and his fellow brothers and sisters. The Augustinian heart is passionately alive, with the desire to know God and experience divine love in our lives. The open book represents the Sacred Scriptures and St. Augustine's own conversion to Christianity. It symbolizes the Word of God, source of light and truth, and the quest for wisdom. The arrow which pierces the heart represents the Spirit of God piercing our hearts, calling us to continued growth in faith, hope and love. This is the basis of that great restlessness, so typical of St. Augustine, which led him to seek God in all things and above all things. A true model for Assumptionists – a true model for all believers in Jesus Christ

We are always moved by people who speak and act with passion. In religious life, periodically, a Religious Order or Congregation seeks renewal by going back to its founding works and writings because it wishes its members to be enlightened and reinvigorated with the spirit and passion of the founder and the early followers. This is why every year, in the Easter season, we relive the work of the Apostles after the Resurrection and reread the words of Jesus to them so that we, too, may be ignited anew with their passion and joy, with their love and desire to share the story of Jesus, who is good news. After all, the Gospel is as important to life as the air we breathe. In fact, it is even more important because only through the Gospel will we ever find true life, true love, true purpose. And we will discover that not only does Christ want to be fully part of our lives but that he wants to live in the world today through us. Then, like St Paul, we will be able to say that *"It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me!"* (Gal 2:20) This was the burning sensation that the disciples from Emmaus experienced.

**May this be true for all of us also.**

Returning home from work, a woman was shocked to find her house ransacked and burglarized. She telephoned the police at once and reported the crime. The operator put out the call and a dog patrol unit, nearby, was the first to respond. As the police officer approached the house with his dog on a leash, the woman ran out of the house, shuddered

at the sight of the cop and his dog, then sat down on the step. Putting her face in her hands, she moaned, "I come home to find all my possessions stolen. I call the police for help, and what do they do? **They send me a BLIND policeman!**"