

It is no surprise that the two disciples see the Risen One during *the breaking of the bread*. And this detail captures an important truth about the Lord's Supper.

You may have trouble accepting the fact in a physical sense, but the Lord's very lifeblood flows into us in the Lord's Supper.

That's why we call it Holy Communion—it is by partaking of the Body & Blood of Christ, that we are at once *strengthened* — & *reminded* — of our lives in Christ, the perfect image of God. How this all happens is beside the point. What matters is that it does.

It is also significant that, the moment the two disciples recognize Jesus, *Poof!* — he disappears.

Before there's even time to say "Abracadabra," the Lord is gone.

"You don't know what you've got till it's gone" — but in this case, even a momentary revelation is okay for the two disciples.

You see, once the sign has been given —

he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

That's all these two disciples needed to be set back on the Way. And so — despite having walked all day long — "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem."

It's no surprise they didn't wait till the morning.

"Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

You know when someone really special kisses you, you don't want to wash that part of your skin? Night had come, but these two disciples had just seen the promise come true &

they did not want to shut their eyes till they passed on their witness: *Our belief is not vain*: Christ did indeed overcome death & rise again to new life!

And so they head straight back to Jerusalem to join with the eleven, to share the good news. By this time, Peter had also seen his Lord. And so the two Emmaus disciples join with the eleven to proclaim together: *Christ is Risen indeed!*

Well, I thought I'd begin today with the ending of today's gospel — to emphasize the main point I see in it. Being the guest at the Lord's Supper,
*we take in the life of God in an act of faith—
& whenever we act in faith, we open ourselves up to God—&
this pleases God.*

Some of you will know this from the experience of taking Communion.

Your faith is quickened, & your eyes & ears are widened. You *“taste & see that the Lord is good!”*

Others have to take these words in trust.

And while it's only normal that we experience things in different ways, I invite you to believe that, when we gather in front of the Lord's Table to break bread & to partake of it, your eyes will be opened, & you will recognize the Lord, our saviour. As Jesus says, “Seek & you will find.”

Well, now that we recall how it ends — let's swing back a few verses in today's gospel.

And what comes just before the breaking of bread?

“As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly” to stay with them.

It's been a long day's journey together, but finally they arrive where the two disciples have been heading. But instead of letting Jesus go on his way, the two disciples invite him in.

In order to appreciate this detail, let's imagine a different scenario. Imagine the disciples had decided to call it a day, leaving Jesus to go on his way.

Needless to say, there would be no breaking of the bread — which is to say, the disciples would not have seen for themselves, the Risen One.

It makes you wonder, how many other disciples never saw the Risen Christ with their own eyes?

Did he appear to some folks that failed to see him—who listened & were impressed, but never broke through to *recognize* the Lord?

I ask these questions for our sake.

After all, many of us do not see Christ sometimes.

Looking back on the gospel, we see that before the disciples recognize Christ, their hearts are stirred up when he interprets what we know as the Old Testament —

“Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.”

This isn't enough for them to see Christ, but it does seem to be a significant part of the warm up.

That is why it is important to seek knowledge of the Bible — the story of God at work in the world he created:

As much as we might struggle to understand it, Scripture primes our hearts, to truly *experience* God in our lives.

Just living with the word of God in our minds — this opens us to God in the world.

But the disciples go a step farther, inviting Jesus to stay with them.

From the view of psychology, serving others releases endorphins & other pleasant chemicals in our brains. That is as far as the world can see into God's hand: *it serves us to serve others*. Doing good is good for us. And many people say it makes them happy to see others' happy.

But, as people with eyes to see Christ among us — & as people who endeavour to see Christ among us — we know how *having a heart that burns to see God in our lives*, how the very desire to follow Jesus — to walk in his footsteps, serving others in love — we know how this *inclines our hearts* to do good. We know it pleases God, to offer ourselves in Christ, as *living* sacrifices to the glory of God.

The fact that Christ is revealed to us in our relations with others gives a pretty clear indication that, though we are not *saved by works*, works are a sure way to receive *signs of God's grace*.

Our faith grows as we put it into practice. We begin to see in the Spirit — & it is a wonderful way to see the world!

You see, there's a lot of terrible things happening in the world. And this has always been the way of the world. But that's seeing the world *through human eyes*. The fact that Christ rose from the dead & overcame death for our sake — that is not something merely human eyes can ever see. Seeing the Risen One, we know we have nothing to fear. Christ redeemed us, once & for all. May God strengthen us all, to see God's work being done — quietly, patiently preparing to raise up the whole earth to a new creation.