

The Third Sunday of Easter, Cycle A
Acts 2:14, 22-33
Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35
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The two travellers on the road to Emmaus knew all about the fate that Jesus had suffered in Jerusalem. They had heard about his arrest, his crucifixion and his burial. They had been discussing it for miles -- going over the story again and again -- looking at it from every angle, but it just didn't make sense. They knew Jesus was a powerful prophet. They had hoped he was the savior of Israel. He taught them to have unquestioning trust in God no matter what. Yet he had been executed as a common criminal. How could such a thing happen? And now there was astonishing news about an empty tomb, and visions of angels. What did it all mean? The two travellers had all the facts they needed to arrive at the truth about Jesus. But they just couldn't see.

Then the resurrected Christ himself joined the two disciples on their walk. He said to them, "What little sense you have! How slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken." And he proceeded to explain to them every passage of Scripture that referred to him. So they had all the *facts* of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. They had the *Scriptures*. They had Jesus Christ himself explaining the meaning of the Scriptures. Yet the two disciples *still* didn't recognize Jesus. Apparently nothing could make them realize the truth of Jesus' identity.

But though they didn't recognize him, they were fascinated by his words. When they reached Emmaus, dusk was coming on, and they asked

the stranger to stay with them. He agreed. They sat down to dinner. The stranger took bread in his hands. He broke it and gave it to them. With that simple gesture, their eyes were opened. They realized who he was. What all of their discussion of the events at Jerusalem had failed to do -- was accomplished by a simple gesture. They had recognized him in the breaking of the bread.

And so it is for us. We treasure our knowledge of our faith. We tell and retell the stories of our Savior's life, death and resurrection. We read the Scriptures with reverence, and ponder their meaning. Yet we recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Our Lord is present to us in our celebration of the Eucharist. We live in an era of gaudy rituals and great media extravaganzas, but ironically, the most powerful, meaningful events in our lives involve only simple gestures: A young couple exchanges vows; water is poured over the head of a child, bread is blessed and broken. No hype or fanfare, no celebrities or media coverage, just people who have come together to worship God. People who have brought with them all the distractions and worries, all the joys and sorrows of their week. People who know in their hearts that Jesus has been walking with them on their week's journey. But who *recognize* him in the bread, blessed and broken.