



20. April 2022

The Risen Lord reveals Himself

Lk 24:13-35

Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognising him. He said to them, 'What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?' They stopped, their faces downcast. Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' He asked, 'What things?' They answered, 'All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have now gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they could not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing. Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself. When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them saying, 'It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?' They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

Apparently, it was not so easy to recognise the Lord in his glorious body. Several passages in the apparitions of the Risen Lord point this out to us. This is also the case

in today's Gospel. Jesus walks for a long time with the two disciples and talks with them. Scripture tells us that "their eyes were prevented from recognising Him".

What kind of blindness would that have been? It certainly does not refer to the blindness that darkens man as a result of sin, so that he is no longer able to recognise God's light clearly. Nowhere are we told that the disciples would have disowned Jesus after his death.

The key to understanding this kind of blindness is found in Jesus' words to them in the course of the conversation, *"You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory?"*

Many Gospel passages show us Jesus' dissatisfaction with the disciples' unbelief (cf. e.g. Mt 17:17). Should they, who had been so close to the Lord, not have believed with particular firmness? The fact that this was not the case tells us that it is not primarily experience that leads us to believe, although it can certainly help us. Faith is a supernatural virtue, infused in us by God, but it requires an open heart.

Therefore, what is needed on our part to have a simple faith is simply to open our hearts, just as a child trusts his father. In this way, we can come to know God ever more deeply through faith, and strengthen our trusting relationship with Him.

In our prayer, we can also ask the Lord to increase our faith, just as the apostles did: *"Increase our faith"* (Lk 17:5). Jesus takes pity on their lack of faith and comes to the aid of the disciples. He reveals Himself to them through typical gestures that they knew about Him, and then their eyes were opened and their blindness was dispelled. Also the burning in their hearts when they heard Him speak was for them a sign that it was Jesus with whom they were speaking.

In our personal lives too, it can sometimes happen that we do not recognise the presence of the Lord in certain circumstances of our lives. If we ask Him more, He will certainly communicate in such a way that we understand.

It may take more patience and perseverance to ask. Perhaps the Lord will not respond immediately. But if He does, He will do so in order to form us, so that we will seek Him more earnestly and, having understood His answer, experience with all the more gratitude the gift of faith. How easily we forget the works of God! Through our lack of gratitude, we run the risk that what He gives us is pushed into the background. It is

gratitude that makes us always keep in mind what God has given us, and thus strengthens our faith.

The Risen One does not leave us as orphans: He is with us always, until the end of time! We discover him in his Word, in the holy sacraments, in the authentic teaching of the Church, in our brother or sister, in our own heart, in the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in so many other ways. He always says to us: *"Look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."* (Mt 28:20b)