



The Road to Emmaus

Introduction

This time the format is slightly different.

This time we have based these meditations and prayers on the disciples' walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. As such, it has an obvious beginning, middle and end – although, like any pilgrimage you can join at any point along the route. It is a story, which has inspired countless people throughout the ages, since it reflects our own journey to Christ – and that of His church.

In addition, we have taken a meditative story by Hilary Faith-Jones, from her book “Awakenings” as the basis for our ‘stopping points’; so it is her imaginative story which provides a backdrop to this meditation.

However, we do have points to stop, to think and to pray. We have divided Hilary's story into seven quite unequal parts: each part has inspired a scripture reading, a meditation, some (hopefully) stimulating or challenging questions and a prayer – except section 4, where the ‘story’ is also the meditation for that section.

Everyone is at a different point in their own journey. Some will be at a really low point, while others will be at a high point – or maybe just trundling along on a plateau. The question for all of us is: ‘what do we need to do to move ourselves forward in the love of God?’.

We hope that here is something for everyone and you will find enough in this booklet to challenge you and allow you to think and pray, so that you will end the day further along your own personal road to Christ.

It is neither a race nor an exam. Whether you do one station or them all, is not important: what is important is that you are able to have the time to be quiet and talk to God. Enjoy it!



The Walk to Emmaus

(Mark 16.12-13)

On that same day two of Jesus' followers were going to a village named Emmaus, about eleven kilometres from Jerusalem, and they were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. As they talked and discussed, Jesus himself drew near and walked along with them; they saw him, but somehow did not recognize him. Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?"

They stood still, with sad faces. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have been happening there these last few days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. "This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified.

And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened. Some of the women of our group surprised us ; they went at dawn to the tomb, but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him."

Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?" And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets.

As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; but they held him back, saying, "Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark." So he went in to stay with them. He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others and saying, "The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon!"

The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.



THE STRANGER

Taken from "Awakenings" by Hilary Faith-Jones

1. **T**here was no point in looking back. Three crosses etched against the sky, brutal, violent, bloody. Scars in the memory.
2. The two travellers were wrapped within themselves, encircled by pain and despair, so didn't notice the man waiting at the side. He made them start, appearing as he did from the quickening shadows.
May I journey with you?
They nodded silently, barely glancing at him. And so he fell in step with them, yet it seemed a struggle for him to check his stride to theirs, so full of life and vitality and exuberance was he.
3. Conversation was stilted and disjointed, until in exasperation the bigger of the men stopped and looked at the stranger.
Look! We don't want to talk.
He put his hand to the side of his head.
We've had it up to here, don't you understand? Leave off will you!

The stranger nodded slowly yet did not withdraw from them.
And they walked on
and the silence seemed heavy.
But it was impossible for him to be silenced and in the end, he had to ask,
Why do you grieve so much?
4. The other traveller needed to talk and with a deep breath he turned to the stranger,
We watched our friend die!
he began, and in the dusk, he saw again, in the face of the stranger, the look of the man he loved and his grief caught him and his voice broke and he turned away to smother down the pain.
He was more than our friend, the first traveller rapped out furiously.
more than that, times one hundred - Bigger, stronger.
He felt the rage growing inside him.
We had such dreams, such hopes, such belief that we could change the world, feelings and thoughts bigger than words can ever describe.

But as he spoke, the rage started to erupt into an angry tide within, obscuring sense or reason.

But he's dead! he shouted at the stranger. *D'you understand?*

Dead and cold and empty, just like our hopes and dreams.

D'you know what it's like to be like that?

To really believe in someone and then he's gone. - And you think he'll walk back in through the door - or it's his voice in the crowd - or he's just round the corner.

And then you remember

he's dead.

It's finished and nothing's left.

The traveller stopped, dimly aware that he was towering over the stranger, pushing him back with the force of his rage.

And he felt very cold, and his eyes were filled with death and his voice was very quiet,

And worse than all the anger, all the hate, all the guilt, is the pain.

Because at the heart of it, we loved him so very much.

The traveller slowly dropped his hands and turned back to the road.

You could never understand this hell.

And because the light had dropped and their hearts were not seeking, they did not see the look on the face of the stranger or they would have recognised one who had lived through hell, through pain at its most searing, through human grief at its deepest.

But the light had dropped.

And the moment passed and the stranger fell back in step with them.

5. And this time, somehow, it was different.

This time, they all talked of the past and the present, of dying and living, of God and themselves.

And the journey flew by and they forgot their weary hearts and Emmaus was before them.

They hesitated at the crossroads, suddenly awkward at parting. Didn't want to let go.

6. *Come home with us*, they said.

And the man whose sorrow was caught with rage, held out his hand in welcome.

Please! Come home with us.

Simple words, — simply offered, — simply received.

And the house of mourning lit the lamps,
and the families gathered around the table
and watched the stranger with respect.

7. And the stranger took the bread and blessed it,
and as his strong fingers tore it in two he bowed his head
and it was as if he could no longer bear their lack of seeing,
for when he looked up his eyes shone with the truth
and with arms flung open,
he offered broken bread.

Himself!

Jesus!



*Keep my heart seeking, Lord
So I do not miss you
when I pass through the shadows.*

*Keep my heart seeking, Lord
so I do not obscure
your many attempts to talk to me.*

*Keep my heart seeking, Lord
so I may recognise you
in the many forms of broken bread*

*Keep my heart seeking, Lord
so I can walk the heaven on earth
for you are walking with me.*





There was no point in looking back. Three crosses etched against the sky, brutal, violent, bloody. Scars in the memory.

Scripture Reading: Psalm 22



My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;

and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people.

All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me; they shake their heads;

“Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”

Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe from my mother’s breast.

On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bā’shan surround me;

they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shrivelled; I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me; they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!

Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!

Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen, you have rescued me.

I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me, but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

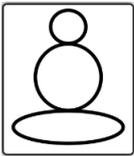
The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.



Meditation:

Inspiration is a funny thing, you find it in quite unexpected places! I looked up the first line of this psalm on the internet and I found an Atheist website. They were talking about mother Teresa's crisis of faith and how it would have been much better if she had recognised that her feelings were right and that there was no God. They went on to say that everyone should do the same and, although they didn't say so explicitly, they included Christ himself in that category.

What they hadn't realised – or chose to ignore – is that the psalm that Jesus quoted is actually a song of triumph and hope.

I wonder what they would make of the last four lines:

For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it

And of course, Mother Teresa carried on to the end too – so, watch out, you Atheists!



A Thought:

What makes you think that there is a God? What are your reasons? Mother Teresa considered herself a hypocrite: publicly she loved God; inside she felt abandoned. What do you think? Was she right? Have you ever felt like that? What would /did you do?



Prayer:

Heavenly Father,

we rejoice today in the resurrection of your Son. Through his obedience, your love re-opened the gates of heaven for us, and gained for us a reward for faith so wonderful that no human eye has seen, no human ear has heard, no human spirit ever guessed at how wonderful it is. Keep us faithful to you, and make us worthy of the promises of Christ, through whom we make this prayer. Amen.

(Taken from St Benedict's Prayer Book)



The two travellers were wrapped within themselves, encircled by pain and despair, so didn't notice the man waiting at the side.

He made them start, appearing as he did from the quickening shadows.

May I journey with you?

They nodded silently, barely glancing at him. And so he fell in step with them, yet it seemed a struggle for him to check his stride to theirs, so full of life and vitality and exuberance was he.



Scripture Reading:

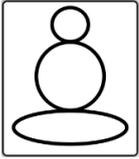
Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading!

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?
But with you is found forgiveness,
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord,
I count on his word;
my soul is longing for the Lord
more than watchmen for daybreak,
(Let the watchman count on daybreak
and Israel on the Lord.)

Because with the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
Israel indeed he will redeem
from all its iniquity.



Meditation:

“I don’t know why we watch the News, there’s never anything interesting on these days:”

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!*

A trail of desolate people on the road and tents in huddled rows.

They’ve made 3D surround-sound films with smells, but they’ll never manage the gut-tightening panic that grips when the bottom drops out of your world.

Out of the depths...

Do you go – or do you stay? Will you be safe? If you go, where? To what?

So you go – or stay – and wake up after half-an-hour’s sleep, panic struck.

What will happen? When? What will they do?

I cry to you, O Lord.

An unsafe sinking, stinking ship and the wet kids whimpering with hunger, cold and fright.

Lord, hear my voice!

The underneath of a lorry in Calais because the family back home is starving and you have nothing to lose.

Out of the Depths I cry...

Waiting in Queen’s Gardens in Croydon for soup and a sandwich and maybe, just maybe, a sleeping bag because it’s minus 5° tonight.

...to you, O Lord.

And we reach for another chip and change the channel.



A Thought:

What should we do about asylum-seekers or refugees? Desperate people. - “I cry to you, O Lord” – where is He?

If you were them, what would you hope? Where is God?

It is said that we are all just one step away from being homeless –

How does that make you feel about ‘benefit scroungers’? Is the Caterham food Bank a good idea? - Or a Parish S.V.P.?



Prayer:

Lord, recently someone I know well had tragic news. They are distressed, confused and numbed by grief. Their world seems to have ended and nobody can reach them. Their sorrow imprisons them like a stone wall

Loving Lord, show me how to help them.

So often I am embarrassed by grief or distress. I don't know what to do – and the easiest thing is to do nothing. Lord, these things cannot be erased by magic – but what would comfort me? – What would I want or need?

Perhaps the knowledge that you are there for us, walking beside us, welcoming. Help me to be there too, just walking beside my friend, ready to do whatever is needed.

Lord, you were with your disciples on the road. Walk with me now and always: enjoy my joys and comfort me in my sorrows, so that I, too, may do the same for others.

(With thanks for help from 'Lord of the Evening' by Frank Topping.)



Conversation was stilted and disjointed, until in exasperation the bigger of the men stopped and looked at the stranger.

Look! We don't want to talk.

He put his hand to the side of his head.

We've had it up to here, do you understand? Leave off will you

The stranger nodded slowly yet did not withdraw from them. And they walked on and the silence seemed heavy.

But it was impossible for him to be silenced and in the end, he had to ask:

Why do you grieve so much?



Scripture Reading: *Romans 8: 26-27*

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, for, when we do not know how to pray properly, then the Spirit personally makes our petitions for us in groans that cannot be put into words; and he who can see into all hearts knows what the Spirit means because the prayers that the Spirit makes for God's holy people are always in accordance with the mind of God.

Meditation:



“WHY ME?” “It wasn’t my fault – it just happened” “It’s NOT fair!”
“Oh God, I really can’t be bothered tonight, I’ll talk tomorrow!”
“O God, you CAN’T be serious!” “Oh God, WHY?”

I often wonder, with a touch of envy, at those people who seem to have a hot line to God. They seem to pray so easily – they must be very holy!

Don’t they ever feel so upset they shout at God in anger? Don’t they ever slink away, too embarrassed or ashamed to pray? Don’t they ever sulk at God? What about too tired (or tipsy)? What about too busy – or just plain forgot? What about ‘don’t care’?

What happens in our earthly families? Didn’t you ever shout at your Dad or Mum? Weren’t you ever so ashamed at what you’d done that you avoided them? Haven’t you ever been too tired (or drunk) to talk? If you haven’t, you must be one in a million – probably 10 million – and if you haven’t ever told your parents that they don’t understand, you must be the only one on the planet!

Of course, there’s the other side of the coin. We know and trust that our Mum and Dad will love us and care for us no matter what. So we creep back and say we’re sorry – or first we use our Mum or Auntie to make it alright with our Dad – or the other way round. How very good is the “Group Hug” or cuddle then?

Christ has given us that wonderful intimate prayer that defines our relationship with God our Father: “Our Father...” - “Abba” – the child’s name for their dad in Jesus’ own home language that he used indoors. And not for nothing is the Holy Spirit called ‘The Advocate’ – the ‘go-between’: – as St Paul says: “The Spirit makes our petitions for us.”

So deep down we trust that however much we shout or sulk or look the other way, God loves us as only our true Dad can and we must come back to cuddle up tight, and to chat, safe in his arms.



A Thought:

If you commute by train, look around and count the number of people reading the bible or praying. How and when do you pray?

Fathers get called all sorts of fond names by their offspring, but Jesus called God the Father by what in English would probably most commonly be ‘Daddy’ or ‘Dad’. Is this an acceptable relationship? Does it affect the way you talk to God – and to other people?



Prayer:

Lord, when life's hard, and puzzling, and I can't see the way ahead, it would be so much easier if you did everything for me. Answered my questions. Dealt with my problems. Bulldozed a road right through the wilderness, and signposted it, just so. Life could be so much smoother if you helped a little more.

A coin in the slot God, who let me win each time I pulled the handle. I'd like that, Lord. No worry, never any risk. I could relax, and concentrate on loving you.

Cupboard love, I hear you say? Well, yes, you have a point. If loving you depended on the way you fixed the path, it wouldn't have much value. The lowest form of payment. Tit for tat.

And would I want it round the other way? That your love too depended on my doing everything just so? I'd be in quite a hole if that were true. If love were measured out by what I'd earned, there wouldn't be so much of it about.

But, thank you Lord, it doesn't work like that. Your love's available for free, and loving wisdom says the struggle that I face is part and parcel of your love.

My problems come, not in spite of love, but because of it. You gather up the pains into your plan, and draw me to yourself, mature and stronger than I was before.

(From "Breaking the Rules" by Eddie Askew)



Scripture Reading: (Luke 23: 44 – 49)



It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father! Into your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died.

The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, "Certainly he was a good man!"

When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch.



Meditation:



The other traveller needed to talk and with a deep breath he turned to the stranger,

We watched our friend die, he began - and in the dusk he saw again, in the face of the stranger, the look of the man he loved and his grief caught him and his voice broke and he turned away to smother down the pain.

He was more than our friend, the first traveller rapped out furiously. More than that. Bigger, stronger.

He felt the rage growing inside him.

We had such dreams, such hopes, such belief that we could change the world, feelings and thoughts bigger than words can ever describe.

But as he spoke,

the rage started to erupt into an angry tide within, obscuring sense or reason.

But he's dead! he shouted at the stranger. *D'you understand?*

Dead and cold and empty, just like our hopes and dreams.

D'you know what it's like to be like that?

To really believe in someone and then he's gone.

And you think he'll walk back in through the door

or it's his voice in the crowd

or he's just round the corner.

And then you remember

he's dead.

It's finished and nothing's left.

The traveller stopped, dimly aware that he was towering over the stranger, pushing him back with the force of his rage.

And he felt very cold,

and his eyes were filled with death and his voice was very quiet,

And worse than all the anger, all the hate, all the guilt, is the pain.

Because at the heart of it, we loved him so very much.

The traveller slowly dropped his hands and turned back to the road.

You could never understand this hell.

And because the light had dropped and their hearts were not seeking,

they did not see the look on the face of the stranger

or they would have recognised one who had lived through hell,

through pain at its most searing,

through human grief at its deepest.
But the light had dropped.
And the moment passed
and the stranger fell back in step with them.



A Thought:

Why doesn't God stop good people dying young? What does He expect?

Christ, during his ministry healed many people of many diseases. On each occasion the Gospel writers report that he 'was moved by compassion'. If He felt like that then, does he still feel like that?

Read the book of Job. What about Job's suffering and God's response?



Prayer:

Lord, the pious words of righteous people don't always ring a bell with me. Faced with the pain of suffering, disappointment, damaged hopes, whether it's my pain or another's, I find it hard to hear it said that 'God knows best'.

I know you do know best, but to load responsibility on you, to imply that, somehow, that makes it right and proper that people suffer, isn't a satisfying answer.

And when, sometimes, I shout to you out loud, the answer that I get is deafening silence.

That's not so helpful either.

Then, I'm thrown back upon myself, and see my own vulnerability. And out of that grows prayer.

Because it's only out of need that real prayer comes. Or so it seems.

The cut worm, the pruned branch, both bleed, each in its own way.

And in the bleeding lies its healing. Lies new growth.

One of the many miracles of daily life.

Lord, when I scream, and others too, gather us to yourself.

Help me to see, and them, that understanding isn't all that matters. Isn't at the root of things.

The truth is, that when I'm grafted into you, my pain is your pain. My groan your groan.

And your healing is mine. In time.

And in eternity.

From "Facing the Storm" by Eddie Askew.



And this time, somehow, it was different.
This time, they all talked - of the past and the present,
of dying and living, - of God and themselves.

And the journey flew by and they forgot their weary hearts and Emmaus was before them.

They hesitated at the crossroads, suddenly awkward at parting.

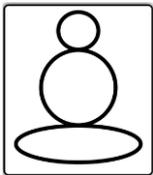
Didn't want to let go.

Scripture Reading: (Mark, 10, 13-15)



They brought children for him to touch; and the disciples scolded them for it. But when Jesus saw this he was indignant, and said to them, Let the children come to me; do not try to stop them; for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it.

Meditation: *(Taken from "Prayers of Life" by Michel Quoist)*



If we knew how to listen to God, we should hear him speaking to us. For God does speak. He speaks in his Gospel; he speaks also through life—that new Gospel to which we ourselves add a page each day. But because our faith is too weak and our life too earth-bound, we are rarely open to God's message. To help us to listen, at the beginning of our new intimacy with Christ, let us imagine what he would say if he himself interpreted his Gospel for today:

God says: "I like youngsters. I want people to be like them.

- I don't like old people unless they are still children.

I want only children in my kingdom; this has been decreed from the beginning of time.

Youngsters—twisted, humped, wrinkled, white-bearded—all kinds of youngsters, but youngsters.

There is no changing it, it has been decided, there is room for no one else.

I like little children because my likeness has not yet been dulled in them.

They have not botched my likeness, they are new, still growing, they are still improving.

They are on the road; they are on their way.

But with grown-ups there is nothing to expect any more. They will no longer grow, no longer improve.

They have come to a full stop.

It is disastrous—grown-ups think they have arrived."



A Thought:

We each seem to have our own private challenge which separates us from God. The 'Our Father' says "lead us not into temptation" but the bible translates it as "do not put us to the test". St Paul recommends prayer. What is your challenge? Do you accept it or fight it? How? A local school has the motto "to work is to pray". How can this be true? How does it work? Is it possible to talk to God during the day?



Prayer:

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, help me today to realise that you will be speaking to me through the events of the day, through people, through things and through creation.

Give me the ears, eyes and heart to perceive you, however veiled your presence may be.

Give me the insight to see through the exterior of things to the interior truth.

Give me your Spirit of discernment.

O Lord, you know how busy I must be this day, if I forget you, do not forget me.

(Jacob Astley – 1579 – 1652)



Come home with us, they said.

And the man whose sorrow was caught with rage, held out his hand in welcome.

Please! Come home with us.

Simple words, — simply offered, — simply received.

And the house of mourning lit the lamps,
and the families gathered around the table
and watched the stranger with respect.

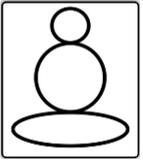
Scripture Reading: Luke 19: 1 - 6



Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short, he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.



Meditation:

Quite often I take the back road from Redhill to Caterham and at one turn in the road is a homely house. Maybe, after the dark road, it's the light and the glimpse of the room through the window. Maybe, it's just the house – not too big, but solid and safe, that makes it homely. I don't know. Tolkien's "Last Homely House" in his "Lord of the Rings" trilogy gives the same impression: somewhere welcoming and safe: somewhere to rest with family and friends.

I like to think that the disciples weren't just being polite, but really wanted to make sure their new friend had somewhere safe to stay, rather than setting back off alone into the night.



A Thought:

Do we make the same invitation when we buy "The Big Issue"?
Is it possible to make that same invitation ourselves to Christ?

When Christ comes to us in Communion, how do we receive him? - How do we welcome Him?

They say 'familiarity breeds contempt'. Maybe we are not contemptuous, but how is it possible to welcome Christ with renewed joy each time we receive Him?



Prayer:

Lord, when you offered to go with the centurion to cure his servant, he said that his house was too poor for you and a word would do:

*"Lord, I am not worthy that you should come into my house,
but only say the word and my servant will be healed."*

Lord, how could we be worthy of you? How could any of us be worthy?

Worthy? Me? No way!

After all, you're my King – and God!

Luckily worth doesn't come into it. You love us – *really* love us – and what love!

A king's ransom of love, paid for by the king!

*Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof,
but I love it when you come anyway and I long for you to stay.*

Please come!



And the stranger took the bread and blessed it,
and as his strong fingers tore it in two he bowed his head
and it was as if he could no longer bear their lack of seeing,
for when he looked up his eyes shone with the truth
and with arms flung open,
he offered broken bread

Himself!

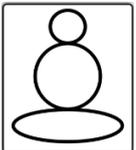
Jesus!



Scripture Reading:

Mark 14: 22 - 25

And as they were eating, he took bread, and when he had said the blessing, he broke it and gave it to them. 'Take it,' he said, 'this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he handed it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them, 'This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, poured out for many. In truth I tell you, I shall never drink wine any more until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.'



Meditation:

Leonardo Da Vinci, in his famous painting of the Last Supper, has Christ and his disciples lined up along one side of the table. Of course, this is very convenient, since he can show them all celebrating the Passover in their individual ways, but it also leaves space for us to take our places.

I am always filled with wonder at the miracle of the Mass. Here we are, twenty centuries later, transported back through time and space to sit again at the table, celebrating as one of the disciples with Christ in the centre.

With Christ we remember how, through the saving, life-giving blood of the lamb, the Israelites passed over from slavery into the desert on the way to the Promised Land, fed by the unleavened bread, the flesh of the lamb and 'Manna', the 'bread from Heaven' and how the Old covenant was established through Moses.

But then of course, with Christ, the new Moses, we move with the new covenant, Christ as the new lamb, under the appearance of unleavened bread (bread from heaven?), – and the new life-giving blood, under the guise of wine – in the Eucharist.

Do I remember that at every Mass? Well, no! I'm just as likely to remember the arrangements for dinner, or the people I want to talk to afterwards. It is, however, part of the bigger picture: one reason why, for me, the Mass is such a wonderful miracle, where, like the disciples in Emmaus, we recognise Christ in the "breaking of bread".



A Thought:

Do we recognise the risen Christ in the consecrated bread and wine?



Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in your wonderful sacrament you have left us a memorial of your death and resurrection. Teach us so to reverence these sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may perceive within ourselves the fruits of our redemption and show them forth in our lives, for you are alive and reign, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen

(St Thomas Aquinas)



Of course, that was not the end of the matter: the disciples remembered "how their hearts burned within them" talking to Jesus. They "left at once" and went back to Jerusalem - they HAD to be excited and joyful! As Pope Francis says: "there are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter" As disciples, we must remember that we are the "Easter People"!



Lord my God, teach my heart this day where and how to see you, where and how to find you.

You have made me and remade me, and you have bestowed on me all the good things I possess, and still I do not know you.

I have not yet done that for which I was made.

Teach me to seek you, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, or find you unless you show yourself to me.

Let me seek you in my desire, let me desire you in my seeking.

Let me find you by loving you, let me love you when I find you.

(Saint Anselm /1033-1109)