

Theme: **WE ARE PILGRIM PEOPLE!**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER!**  
19 April 2026

After the series of tragic events that culminated in the crucifixion and death of Jesus outside Jerusalem, we see two disciples, cloaked in near despair, journeying back to their village Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35). As they walked, they spoke of all that had just transpired in Jerusalem. Then “a stranger”—Jesus Himself—came up and walked along with them.

When He asked what they were discussing, one of them answered, “About Jesus of Nazareth.” They then recounted all that had happened to Him in Jerusalem. One statement reveals why the two disciples were plunged into such deep sorrow: “We were hoping that He would be the one to redeem Israel.” Like many Jews, they were convinced that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. But with His death, their hope seemed shattered into pieces.

Yet Jesus would not let them remain wallowing in their sorrow. So He told them, “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” And forthwith, Jesus did again what He used to do while still with them—He reached out to them and taught them. Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in the Scriptures concerning Himself. They must have been convinced, for later they said, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”

As they approached the village, Jesus gave the impression that He was going on farther. But when they urged Him to spend the evening with them, He readily agreed. Parenthetically, this is how Jesus deals with us: **\*HE NEVER FORCES HIMSELF UPON US—HE WANTS US TO BE OPEN TO AND ACCEPT HIM OF OUR OWN VOLITION.\***

It was while Jesus was at table with them that His very simple and ordinary act turned their despair into hope and joy. “HE TOOK BREAD, SAID THE BLESSING, BROKE IT, AND GAVE IT TO THEM”—the very same actions He performed when He instituted the Eucharist on Holy Thursday. In other words, Jesus was celebrating the Eucharist with them! And it was only after this that they recognized Him as the Risen Lord.

In their joy, they immediately rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the others of their experience on the road, and how they had recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

The return of the two disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus was a pilgrimage of faith—of lost and found faith. It is from this vivid account, among others, that theologians now say the Church is a Pilgrim Church. What this means is that the Church, while on pilgrimage towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, is also at work in the world so as to make it more human and more Christian by the power of love—for God and for one another. For like her divine Master, she believes that a world preoccupied with self can only be made better through love made concrete in good deeds.

As members of the Church, each one of us is also a pilgrim; we, too, are on the march to our heavenly home. But even as we believe that the earth is not our permanent home, while we are still here, we are to do our best to make it a better place for all of us by being at each other's service in love.

As pilgrims, however, we meet all kinds of obstacles along the way—personal ones such as our frustrations, failures, hunger, and inadequate shelter. Sometimes, because these appear insurmountable, our faith may weaken and may even make us abandon the march. Moreover, lured by the attractions and pleasures of material things, we may be tempted to make our stay on earth permanent.

Thus, instead of just buying food and drink from a roadside store or staying overnight in a lodging house only to move on the next day, we buy both the store and the house, live and do business there. We then focus our attention on the acquisition of wealth, power, and fame. When this happens, we have lost sight of the very reason why we are pilgrims on the march.

We can learn much from what the two disciples did after they recognized Jesus in the “breaking of the bread.” Their encounter with Jesus had made them see the events in Jerusalem from a new perspective—God's. Instead of looking at Jesus' death as the end of their aspirations, they now viewed it as the beginning of a new life in the Risen Christ. That was why, that same night, they went back to Jerusalem. From near despair, they had turned into “inspirers” to those whose faith had weakened, so that they too would live in hope and joy again.

Jesus as Word and Eucharist is our food for our pilgrimage to our true home. Do we recognize Him in His teachings and in the “breaking of the bread” as the two disciples did? This is what we should all aspire for—so that we will also become “inspirers” to our fellow pilgrims, the many obstacles along the way notwithstanding.

Indeed, the disciples did not keep this experience to themselves—they ran back to share the Good News. Today, we are going to witness 11 communicants to receive Jesus. As you are about to partake Jesus wholeheartedly, you are called to do the same: to carry Jesus in your hearts and share His love with others—through kindness, forgiveness, and faith.

My dear communicants, Jesus walks with you, even when you don't see Him. You come to know Him by listening to His Word. You meet Him in a special way in Holy Communion, and after receiving Him, you are sent to share His love with others.

My dear brothers and sisters, this encounter of Jesus with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus teaches us that the Eucharist is not just something we receive—it is a moment where our eyes are opened, our hearts are filled, and our lives are changed.

Let us therefore adore and receive Jesus in the Eucharist