

The Easter season is a time for rejoicing that Our Lord has shattered the bonds of death through his Resurrection. We celebrate his victory because it is our victory as well. He didn't just shatter the bonds of death for himself, but for all of us.

This weekend children and their families begin their preparation for First Eucharist. Those disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus saw Jesus in a new light – they didn't recognise him at first but through his actions later that day, they recognised that He was the friend whom they loved. Over these few weeks we hope that families, and in particular the children preparing for First Eucharist will also come to see Jesus in a new light. May they come to see Jesus in a way that they haven't recognised before. And not only the children, but their families too. May we all come to see Jesus in a new way as we come to know him deeper. In today's gospel I like very much this part of the story when Jesus was going further than the disciples were when their conversation ended and they asked him to stay with them and he changed his mind. Jesus knew that they needed him to stay with them just a little longer, after discussing the scriptures. Jesus made time for them. He is a powerful role model for all of us. But, the disciples were too, because they had the initiative to ask him to stay. If they had not done so, they would not have known him in the

breaking of the bread. We miss out on so many wonderful opportunities for friendship, a sense of community and a sense of belonging; because we think we are too busy to take time out for these things. Jesus took time out to be with his disciples, just because they asked him to.

In our Catholic Church we have understood this great encounter on the road as referring to the Holy Eucharist, the great Sacrament of Love, wherein Jesus Christ gives Himself completely to us, body, blood, soul and divinity. This is the Sacrament we call "Holy Communion" because it brings us into communion with the Lord and, in Him with one another. Of course, in light of that, this wonderful encounter on the way to Emmaus opens up in beauty for all who reflect on it prayerfully during this Easter season. In the light of the encounter with the Lord in the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened. So it is meant to be with each one of us. The Holy Eucharist is more than a commemoration; it is an invitation into communion with the Living God. That's why, in the Liturgy, the Holy Mass, we move from the Liturgy of the word into the Liturgy of the Eucharist. There we enter into the timeless gift of the Lord, given to us in this Great Sacrament of Sacraments. We, in the words of the Apostle Peter become "partakers of the Divine Nature". The Lord comes to take up residence within us.

We are those disciples on the road to Emmaus, living our lives in the real world, walking along with Jesus who is always there accompanying us on the road, whether we recognize Him or not. He listens to us, and understands us, because he became like us, in "all things but sin" as the author of the letter to the Hebrews tells us. In the Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ we can also begin to see who we are called to become as we grow in continual communion with Him. In this encounter with the Risen Lord, we receive the grace we need to begin to walk the road of our daily lives differently because we have seen the Risen Lord! He walks with us on our own road to Emmaus. We learn to recognize Him, in the breaking of the bread.

I like these moments in this Story:

- *They pressed him to stay with them. It is nearly evening and the day is almost over...he went in to stay with them.*
- *In the breaking of bread, their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight.*
- Where did you go, Lord? Where is he? They asked each other? Jesus where are you? Why can't I see you?

- What are the special moments in which I can clearly see and feel the presence of Jesus?
- *Yes, It is true; the Lord has risen.....and has appeared to Simon.*

He has stayed with us forever just in other ways...