



## GOSPEL GOSSIP

The disciples recognised the risen Jesus  
in the breaking of bread.

St Luke 24. 13-35

Sunday 19th April

This Sunday's gospel reading is a charming, human and revealing story. Two disciples, Cleopas and perhaps the other was his wife – they were having a heated discussion! – were walking back home to their village 7 miles away on Easter talking about Jesus' crucifixion and the unbelievable news that he had risen. Perhaps that's why they didn't really notice a stranger joining them. As in all grief, they couldn't understand why someone else didn't know about what was distressing them, so they poured their hearts out.

This stranger gently rebukes them for failing to understand, and tells them that all that had happened was in accordance with scripture, in accordance with God's will – that the Messiah had to suffer these things and then enter into his glory. This perplexed them, and perhaps us as well. It was one thing to follow, and to love, an inspiring and holy man, but it was something yet further to see that this man was in fact God's Son and their Saviour.

- What or who have you grieved over most recently?
- Have you felt the need to talk about it – why?
- How do you feel about sharing these thoughts, or are you afraid to do so?
- Is there anything that would reassure or comfort you?
- Are you prepared to listen to others' distress?

So their journey went on. Having poured out their needs, the disciples were prepared to listen to the stranger's teaching. Finally, they made it to their home. As duty and politeness dictated, they invited the stranger inside and offered him hospitality. Whilst at table with them, it was he who took the bread, and broke it. Not only was this surprising in that he didn't wait to be offered food, but that he took the host's role in formally breaking the bread. It was then that the disciples recognised that this stranger was their risen master and friend – Jesus. Their reaction was to leave immediately to return to Jerusalem, where the good news was confirmed – that Jesus had indeed risen, and been seen and recognised by others.

It wasn't just the familiar action of Jesus breaking the bread that opened those disciples' eyes. It was a case of the penny dropping. Jesus broke not just the bread, but broke the word – the word of Scripture, so that they understood it in all its meaning. Just as bread is the staple food for the body, so Holy Scripture – the Bible- is the staple food for the soul. And more than that, because of Jesus' command to 'do this in memory of me' at the Last Supper, and the certainty of his statement that 'I am with you always, even to the end of the age', the bread of Holy Communion is another certain way of receiving the risen Christ.

- How do you regard Holy Scripture?
- Does it confuse or enlighten?
- Is it relevant to your life today – in what ways?
- Have you ever wanted to know more yet 'never got round to it'?
- What place does the bread of the eucharist have in your spiritual life?

As we continue to celebrate Easter – a season, not a day – we not only wonder and give thanks for the resurrection of Christ, but also at the many ways and places in which he reveals himself to us today.