Wednesday in the Octave of Easter

Gospel text (*Lk* 24:13-35): That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see." And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the

scriptures to us?”

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

“Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?”

Fr. Luis PERALTA Hidalgo SDB
(Lisboa, Portugal)

Today we are reassured by the Gospel that Jesus is alive and continues to be the center around which the disciples' community is built. The gathering of the community, the dialog with brothers and sisters who share the same faith, the reading of the Word of God, the love shared and expressed through fraternity and service, is precisely the ecclesial context in which the disciples can encounter the Resurrected.

The disciples filled with grief, couldn't even imagine that that stranger was in fact their Master, now resurrected. But they felt “an ardent yearning” in their hearts (cf. Lk 24:32), when He talked, "explaining" the Scriptures. The light of the Word softened their hearts and “their eyes were opened” (Lk 24:31).

The story of the disciples of Emmaus is useful as a guide to us in the long journey through a path of doubts, afflictions and sometimes even bitter disillusionments; the Divine traveler continues to be our companion who introduces us, by explaining the Scriptures, to the comprehension of God's mysteries. Upon the fulfillment of this encounter the light of the Word is followed by the light that emerges from the “Bread of Life”, through which Christ fulfills perfectly His promise that He would be with us “always, until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

The Holy Father Benedict XVI explains that “The proclamation of the Lord's Resurrection lightens up the dark regions of the world in which we live.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Why this should be done by Him who before we ask Him knows what things we have need of, might perplex our minds. Lord our God requires that by prayer there may be exercised in us by supplications that desire by which we may receive what He prepares to bestow.” (Saint Augustine)

- “We believe in God who is Father, who is Son, who is Holy Spirit. We believe in Persons, and when we talk to God we talk to Persons: or I speak with the Father, or I speak with the Son, or I speak with the Holy Spirit.” (Francis)

- “‘He yearns jealously over the spirit which he has made to dwell in us?' (Jas 4:5). That our God is "jealous" for us is the sign of how true his love is. If we enter into the desire of his Spirit, we shall be heard.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, Nº 2737)

Other comments

“Their eyes were opened and they recognized him”

Fr. Xavier PAGÉS i Castañer
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today “This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice in it and be glad.” (Ps 118:24). This is how we are invited to say the liturgy of these days of the Octave of Easter. Let us rejoice in knowing that today and forever the risen Jesus stands among us. He walks with us on the journey. But we must let Him open our eyes of faith for us to realize He is present in our lives. He wants us to enjoy His company complying with what He said to us: “And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” (Mt 28:20).

Let us walk in the hope we have, in the knowledge that the Lord will help us to find a meaning in everything. Particularly, when —as with the disciples at Emmaus— we have to endure difficulties, setbacks, dejection… In front of the different events we should know how to listen to His Word, that will bring us to interpret them in the light of God's project of salvation. Even though, at times, wrongly, we may think He is not listening to us, He never forgets us; He always talks to us. We may, however, be lacking the good disposition necessary to listen, meditate and contemplate what He wants to say.

In the varied environment where we may live, we often find people living, in the ignorance of God, a meaningless life. Thus, it is convenient that we understand our responsibility to become useful tools for our Lord to be able, through us, to come close and walk along with those around us. Let us seek how to make them well aware of their condition of sons of God and of the fact that Jesus loves us so much that He not only died and rose for us, but also He decided to stay with us for ever in the Holy Eucharist. It was when He broke the bread that those disciples at Emmaus realized it was Jesus who was sitting beside them.