

*Meditation of the day*  
COMMENTARY ON LK 24:15-35

Wednesday, 7/17

Lk 25-27 : *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.*

### Commentary

Jesus invites the two disciples on the road to Emmaus to tell of their experiences in Jerusalem concerning Jesus, the Nazarene - a story that seemingly ended in failure. They told of his death on the cross and the reports of his resurrection. We are small and our lives are short, but there is an infinite and an eternal continuum that gives our lives special and indelible meaning.

Jesus explains to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus that defeat, loss, trauma, and death are inevitable but do not permanently destroy anything. They exist, unfortunately, and we have to deal with them every day, but they do not have the last word; the truth does not lie in them. They hurt us, tear us down, prostrate us but they cannot destroy the promise of love, of light, of truth, and of life that God gives us.

There are people who would rather hold on to their pain than take the risk of still hoping. There are times when we would rather anesthetize our hearts and feel nothing more than to take the risk of still being hurt by life.

We had dreamed of a love, a perfect marriage, a perfect child, a rewarding job, a full life, but life betrayed us, the dream broke, burst like a soap bubble.

We had dreamed of a new world, so many of us had dreamed of it, and we had worked on building it in the dream of peace and justice -- God's dream -- but it all collapsed and that long, hard work seems to us to have been utterly useless.

So we go back to cultivating the little field at home, we lock ourselves there, in that fence, alone, and we don't want to see beyond it.

Our eyes are sometimes so fogged with sadness that we do not recognize Jesus, we do not hear his voice, we do not see him within our days.

Life offers us signs: gestures of friends, words, encounters, small facts that could open slits of light for us but we don't catch them, we don't want to catch them because we are wedded to our sorrow, our sadness, our resentment.

Jesus explaining the scriptures along the way "is a call to awakening, it is a tearing off of blindfolds, a demolishing of unnecessary protective devices.

He had to call the disciples fools to enlighten them.

And what is the challenge? To trust. "To trust in the larger scheme of things, to go beyond the sufferings of the moment, to see them as part of a much larger healing process" (Nouwen).



TORINO 2024

13° raduno  
internazionale



"Things falling apart is a kind of test and also a kind of healing. We think the point is to overcome the test or overcome the problem, but the truth is that things don't really come together. They come together and then fall apart. Then they come together again and again they fall apart. It works like this.

Healing comes when you leave space for it to happen: space for pain, relief, suffering, joy.

When there is a big disappointment, we don't know if that will be the end of the story. It could also be the beginning of a great adventure" (Chödrön).

The joy given by faith adapts and transforms in the different stages of life. Even in the most serious difficulties, "little by little, one must allow the joy of faith to begin to awaken, like a secret but firm confidence.

Always it remains at least as a glimmer of light arising from the personal certainty of being infinitely loved, beyond everything" (Francis, EG, 6).

Jesus does this for us; he makes us feel loved. And when we feel loved, we discover how much beauty is hidden in a life of loving service to others. Jesus opens wide windows and we breathe pure air.

The great pedagogical intelligence of Jesus is to help us by his questions and life fulfilling Scriptures to open the windows of our minds and impact our way of seeing life and reacting to the world to constant changes. In other words, he teaches us true wisdom.

Jesus is a teacher of existence. Jesus, "a teacher in the school of existence, was not so much concerned with correcting outward behavior as with stimulating people to think and expand their understanding of life's horizons" (Cury).

Jesus explains the Word to the two disciples along the way and enlightens the two wayfarers, first confused and now attentive. And he invites them to remember the covenant which God made with his people.

The two disciples on the way to Emmaus are like us, uncertain, fragile and doubtful people to whom someone had lit their hearts. And Jesus reminds them of this.

They had found love in Him, someone who could love them as no one else ever could. And this someone not only loved them and made them feel unique, but had also been able to enlarge their hearts in a way they had never experienced.

By loving them, he made them like him, more able to love, freer to reach outside the narrow confines of their small selves.

Through their encounter with Jesus, they had experienced unfamiliar freedom, breathed surprising beauty, experienced intoxicating joy.

Their lives had been nourished, their hearts filled with that peace of God that abides even in the midst of life's thorns.

Behind Jesus' footsteps on the streets and paths of Palestine, the disciples had felt liberated from the bonds of fear. By his words and deeds Jesus had infected them with love for all that lives in this world, even for what seemed abhorrent to them-the sick, the discarded, the deviant, the dying.



TORINO 2024

13° raduno  
internazionale



And he had made them children, taught them to enjoy the beauty of a flower, the flight of a bird. They had learned from him the joy of simple things, to find taste in a sip of wine and a bite of bread and to feel that they needed nothing more.

And when there was no bread, even a few uncooked grains of wheat - harvested from a field and eaten smiling with him and his friends - were enough to be able to say: here, here is everything, I don't need anything else; even if I died now, I would be happy because in this freedom, in this brotherhood, in this giving and receiving of love, in this rejoicing together in the little, here is the fullness of life, and I have experienced it.

Jesus asks the two travelers to Emmaus to look at the harsh reality of the cross with a new gaze. By dying that death, he had shown them a way: the way of self-giving, of the rescuing love that helps everyone to complete fulfillment.

How much we need these words of the Gospel every day, in the face of our small and great losses and bereavements, in the face of the great social and political defeats: wars -- inhumane tactics that should be banished from the face of the earth, which instead are still used to settle conflicts --; the abuse of the weakest, the mass selfishness that seeks privileges and discards people as if they were garbage...

Today the world appears to many to be a world adrift, a ship that will soon run aground and shipwreck.

Too much hatred, too much injustice, too much violence, too much shameful disparity between the gluttonous people and the spindly people like Lazarus, too many innocent deaths in our seas, deserts, too much rage on the earth, on Mother Earth who feeds us...

There is enough love and hope today for everyone to feel like those two in Emmaus.

My young students ask me with sad faces: is there no more future? And I shudder to hear 20-year-olds say that and think of Jesus: yes, there is a future!

The future is him, his promise!

In the Eucharist, the liturgy of the word is offered to us as a gift, so that our memory may be "overflowing with the wonders of God" (Francis, EG 142).

What the Scriptures say speaks intimately to us; it has to do with our lives in a very profound way. In everything we live, Jesus is with us, so even our daily life is sacred history.

We are part of the great river of sacred history, the same river in which the lives of Moses and the prophets, of Mary and Joseph, sailed.

Our stories are sacred history-the stories of God walking with us.

If we stop to think about it, we feel great awe:

*We are a page of sacred history, the Scriptures are alive, fulfilled in our lives today.*

Try to say it with me too, all together: *I am a page of sacred history, God is writing it through us, His instruments.*



Jesus lives and "this is a guarantee that good can make its way into our lives and that our labors will be of some use. Then we can stop complaining and look forward, because with Him, we can always look forward. This is the security we have" (Francis, CV 127).

"Evil does not have the last word," (Francis, CV 126).

It is Jesus who teaches us this. He himself experienced firsthand the pain, the fear, the sense of abandonment in the night at Gethsemane and on the cross. He wept tears and sweated blood.

But "as the last winter leaf fell, when all seemed lost and there was room only for weeping and despair, Christ looked up and saw the flowers of spring hidden among the dry branches of life.

Unlike Christ, we abandon our goals, plans, and dreams at the first signs of trouble. We should learn from him to look up again, to look beyond the difficulties, the sufferings, the defeats, the losses, and to understand that the harshest winters can be a prelude to the most laughing springs" (Cury).

Beyond the visible, beyond the facts of my life and the news we get from the news, there is another happening within real life and it is much deeper. A watermark of light beneath the fabric of my days and of human history.

"I remind you of the good news that was given to us on the morning of the Resurrection: that in all the dark and painful situations of which we speak there is a way out" (Francis, CV, 104).

And whenever we feel dejected, disillusioned, let us remember that God is love, let us repeat "the first truth: God loves you. If you have already heard it, it doesn't matter, I want to remind you: God loves you. Never doubt it, no matter what happens to you in life. Whatever the circumstances, you are infinitely loved" (Francis, CV, 112).

