**3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER [4th May, 2014]**

READINGS: Acts 2:14, 22-33 / 1 Peter 1:17-21 / Luke 24:13-35

THEME: JOURNEYING WITH THE RISEN LORD: TO EMMAUS OR JERUSALEM?

By Very Rev. Fr. John Louis ([http://frlouis.com](http://frlouis.com/))

The Christian life is a journey with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. Today’s gospel reading (Lk. 24:13-35) gives us the opportunity to reflect on how we are journeying with our risen Lord and Saviour. According to the gospel, on the day of our Lord’s resurrection, Cleopas and another disciple journeyed to a village called Emmaus, about 7 miles (11km)from Jerusalem. While conversing about the suffering and death of the Lord, as well as the news about the empty tomb, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they did not recognize Him. However, after arriving that evening at Emmaus, the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of bread, and they excitedly returned to Jerusalem that very night. The question is: **Am I journeying with the risen Lord (from Jerusalem) to Emmaus or (from Emmaus) to Jerusalem?**

FROM JERUSALEM TO EMMAUS: Disappointed that their expected (political) Messiah suffered humiliation, died a shameful death, and the years of following Him had been fruitless, the two disciples travelling to Emmaus could not recognize the risen Lord. At best they took Him to be a stranger. Can you imagine that: their own Master, whom they had travelled several times with, whose miracles they had witnessed, whose voice they had heard several times as He preached, and with whom they had eaten and drunk, was now a stranger to them! They could not even recognize His voice! What could have caused this? It is the lack of faith in the resurrection of the Lord. The lack of faith in His power to rise from the dead made the two disciples feel that the crucifixion of Jesus was the end of their Messiah; and so the message of the empty tomb was a mere fairy tale to them. In short, for the two disciples, the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus was one of **disappointment**, **dis-belief** (unbelief), and **despair** (3 D’s). The resurrection of Jesus made no impact on their lives.

Similarly, our lives could be described as a journey with the risen Jesus **from Jerusalem to Emmaus**, if His resurrection is making no impact on our lives. In other words, if despite the fact that the risen Jesus is always with us, we sometimes feel disappointed by Him, or we sometimes don’t believe He exists, or we despair because of a cross (e.g. sickness, accident, loss of a dear one, joblessness, etc.) we carry.

FROM EMMAUS TO JERUSALEM: According to the gospel reading, the mood of the disciples back to Jerusalem was entirely different. Once they recognized, at the breaking of bread, that Jesus was truly risen, they were filled with joy and excitement! Imagine those who had just told the supposed Stranger (Jesus) that it was evening and so He should spend the night with them returned to Jerusalem that very night! And the very disciples who were disappointed, who dis-believed the resurrection of Jesus, and who were in despair a few hours earlier, now returned to Jerusalem extremely excited to proclaim the good news that Jesus is truly risen! In short then for the two disciples, the journey from Emmaus to Jerusalem, was a journey of faith, hope and joy. It was a journey of faith that Jesus is truly risen; a journey with hope for a better future; and a journey filled with joy, because of the bright prospects that the resurrection of Jesus holds – even death is no longer an end. And all this begun with an act of charity: offering a ‘Stranger’ food to eat and a place to sleep.

Similarly, **our journey with the risen Jesus is destined for Jerusalem, when despite the crosses of our lives, we believe He is truly risen; when our actions are full of hope in heaven (New Jerusalem); when we are excited about proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to others; and when we do all these things with love**.

PRAYER: Beloved, firstly, I pray that anytime we participate in the ‘breaking of bread’ (Eucharist), we will recognize the risen Lord; for it is truly His body and blood, soul and divinity that we receive in the form of bread and wine. Amen! Secondly, I pray that we will always journey with the risen Lord in only one direction – towards the New Jerusalem – with faith, hope and love! Amen!