



IRIA FOUNDATION

What is everywhere, what will always be, what is believed by all

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Easter Monday: The Disciples at Emmaus

At that time two of the disciples of Jesus went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves Jesus Himself also, drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held, that they should not know Him. And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom He said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women, also of our company, affrighted us, who, before it was light, were at the sepulchre, and, not finding His body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not. Then He said to them: O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going, and He made as though He would go further. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to them; and their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? And rising up the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread.

The Gospel according to St Luke, xxiv. 13–35.

Summary of the Morrow's Meditation

We will meditate tomorrow on the touching recital of the disciples of Emmaus, contained in the gospel of the day, and we shall see: first, what, in this circumstance, were their faults and their virtues; second, what the great goodness of Christ was towards them. We will then make the resolution: first, to keep ourselves united in Jesus Christ by recollection, and to be docile to the inspirations of His grace; second, to watch over our conversation in order not to allow a word worthy of reproach to escape our lips. Our spiritual nosegay shall be the words of the apostles: *"Was not our Heart burning within us whilst Jesus spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?"* (Luke xxiv:32)

Meditation for the Morning

Let us transport ourselves in spirit to the road leading to Emmaus; let us consider Jesus Christ drawing near to the two disciples, who were travelling, and joining with them in a holy conversation. Let us bless Him for His assiduous charity, and let us beg Him to enable us to profit by this amiable interview.

The defects and the virtues of the disciples of Emmaus

First, these disciples did not understand how to wait God's own time. Jesus Christ had said, I will rise again on the third day, and they did not wait until the end of the third day, but set off on their journey filled with discouragement. This is a fault which we also often commit; we want to be heard at the very moment; every delay disconcerts us and shakes our faith. We will deserve that Jesus should say to us as He did to them, *"O men of little faith, how slow your heart is to believe!"*

Second, they seek their consolation from exterior things, by going a journey to Emmaus. They forget that true consolation is to be found in God alone, and that there is more loss than profit in seeking it from creatures. If Jesus Christ had not hastened to their aid they would have lost their faith, since they had not believed either the holy women or the apostles attesting to them the resurrection of Jesus Christ; they were on the point of losing their hope, seeing that they were already beginning not to hope. *"We hoped"* (Luke xxiv:21), they said. Lastly, they were about to lose their charity, because they no longer saw in Jesus Christ anything more than a prophet, and no longer spoke of being His disciples, but as being strangers.

Third, it was repugnant to them to understand the connection of two things as inseparable as are the means and the end, that is to say, the cross and glory, death and life, suffering for a short time and enjoying eternally; and it was necessary that Jesus Christ should recall to their remembrance that important truth. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer, and that He should thus enter into His glory? Are we not a little like them?

But if these disciples had their defects, they had also virtues which are suited to edify us. Thus, first, their conversation is holy; and to the question put to them by the Saviour: *"What are these discourses that you hold one with another?"* (Luke xxiv:17) they were able to reply: We are speaking of Jesus (Ibid. 19). Alas, if the Saviour were to present Himself to us in the midst of our conversations, and were to ask us: What are you speaking of? should we not have to blush over many calumnious words, scoffings, disputes, frivolity, ill-temper? and could not Our Lord say to us: Are these the speeches of a Christian, of a heavenly-minded man who aspires after holiness, of a servant of Jesus Christ who has his tongue still tinged with His blood? are these the speeches which at the hour of death you will be very glad to have uttered? Second, our pilgrims listen with great respect to the teaching of Jesus Christ; they engrave it in their heart, which is inflamed with a holy ardour (Ibid. 31); third, they attach themselves to Him, and they desire never to be separated from Him any more. Remain with us, Lord (Ibid. 29), they say to Him. Beautiful words, which we ought to address to ourselves! Remain with us in our troubles, to preserve us from impatience, murmurs, and discouragement, and to teach us to bless God in all things; remain with us in temptations and trials, to sustain us; remain with us in times of dryness and disgust; in seasons of sickness and when in danger of death, to assist us; remain with us in the midst of the ills of the Church and of the darkness of iniquity which covers the earth, to defend and enlighten us; fourth, they recognise Our Lord in the breaking of the bread (Luke xxiv:35), that is to say, in communion; it is there indeed that the Christian soul recognises all the love of the divine Saviour; fifth, after having

received Him they leave for Jerusalem, in order to announce Him to the apostles (Ibid. 33); when we love we have it at heart to make others love those whom we love.

The touching kindness of Jesus towards the disciples of Emmaus

Jesus Christ takes pity on these two wandering sheep who had separated themselves from the other apostles; He draws nigh to them, addresses them gently, engages in conversation with them whilst walking beside them at the same pace, neither quicker nor slower; He asks them of what they are speaking, not because He is ignorant of it, but that He may afford them an opportunity of opening their hearts to Him, and He Himself makes use of the opportunity to explain to them the mystery of His suffering and death. He reproves them charitably, in order to make them examine themselves and recognise their faults; He proves to them that what was said in the Holy Scriptures from the time of Moses down to the prophets of the Messiah is realised in His own person, and at the same time that He enlightens their intelligence He touches their heart, inflames their will, and lights in it the sacred fire of divine love. Lastly, on their arrival at Emmaus, after having allowed them to imagine He was about to pass on, in order to excite in them the desire to keep Him with them, He halts at their hostelry, and as though it had been a church, He there consecrates the Eucharist, distributes it to them, and does not leave them until after having nourished them thus with the Bread of angels. Could there be greater goodness and sweetness? It is thus that Our Saviour acts with regard to ourselves. His predisposing grace comes to seek us in the path of life; it accommodates itself to our weakness, it enlightens us with its divine light, it attracts us by its divine inspirations, it mingles together encouragement and reproaches; lastly, it does not quit us until it has gained us, taking possession of our will without restraining our liberty. Oh, how so much goodness well deserves all our love! How do we respond to it? Are we not unfaithful to grace, and do we not frequently rebel against its inspirations?

Resolutions and spiritual nosegay as above.

Feedback/Typos/Suggestions