

The Road to Emmaus

¹³ And behold, on that very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, which was sixty stadia from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and *began* traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?" And they came to a stop, looking sad. ¹⁸ One *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him, "Are You *possibly* the only one living near Jerusalem who does not know about the things that happened here in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What sort of things?" And they said to Him, "Those about Jesus the Nazarene, who proved to be a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is *now* the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us left us bewildered. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. ²⁴ And so some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ And *then* He said to them, "You foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to come into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the Prophets, He explained to them the things *written* about Himself in all the Scriptures.

²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and He gave the impression that He was going farther. ²⁹ And so they strongly urged Him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ And it came about, when He had reclined *at the table* with them, that He took the bread and blessed *it*, and He broke *it* and *began* giving *it* to them. ³¹ And *then* their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, "Were our hearts not burning within us when He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" ³³ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ They *began* to relate their experiences on the road, and how He was recognized by them at the breaking of the bread.

1. "Jesus walks with two disciples who did not grasp the meaning of all that happened to him, and are leaving Jerusalem and the community behind. Wanting to accompany them, he joins them on the way. He asks them questions and listens patiently to their version of events, and in this way he helps them recognize what they were experiencing. Then, with affection and power, he proclaims the word to them, leading them to interpret the events they had experienced in the light of the Scriptures. He accepts their invitation to stay with

them as evening falls; he enters into their night. As they listen to him speak, their hearts burn within them and their minds are opened; they then recognize him in the breaking of the bread. They themselves choose to resume their journey at once in the opposite direction, to return to the community and to share the experience of their encounter with the risen Lord”.[FD 4]

Pope Francis

2. [With the Road to Emmaus] Luke intertwines experience and narration by several characters, moving progressively and dramatically toward the creation of a community narrative that is the basis for discernment. As such: Luke tells a story of companions on the road, who tell what had happened in the city, who relate what was told them by the women, who have a further experience of Jesus’ words and actions, and who report *this* to the assembled community, which tells *them* in return, of further such events. Beneath the calm and almost matter-of-fact simplicity of this story, a complex process of narration and discernment is in process. Luke shows us how the process of telling and interpreting these diverse experiences begins to not only build a community narrative, but actually begins to create the community itself.

Luke Timothy Johnson, Scripture Scholar

What or Who do you relate to as you hear this story?

How do you feel as you reflect on the reading? How does it speak to you?

What strikes you about Pope Francis’ or Luke Timothy Johnson’s reflections?

Share a story from your own experience of community building and discernment.