



The Lord Is Risen Indeed

Luke 24:13–35

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

April 30, 2017

Thought for the Week

Scripture: Acts 2:14. 22-28 • 1 Peter 1:17-21 • Luke 24:13-35

It has often seemed to me that, of all the many activities in which we take part each day, sitting down to table to eat a meal with someone is often considered of least importance in terms of its meaning. Yet if you think about it, some surprising experiences can occur when we gather to share meals. It all depends with whom we are dining, how we feel at the moment, what the topic of conversation happens to be, even the taste of the food. I've shared meals where the conversation was both friendly and fun. There have also been occasions when I couldn't wait to get up and leave the table. Nevertheless, the meal itself is only the setting for what should occur between us in those circumstances.

I have a hunch that the deeper meaning of eating together is often lost on us because our interest is concentrated on the taste of the food and the quality of the other refreshments rather than on the company of the people with whom we are eating.

Sometimes, odd as it may seem, the most interesting and engaging moments in our day could also occur when we are invited to sit at table and eat with a total stranger or with strangers. On such an occasion we not only have the opportunity to meet someone new but also to learn something entirely different about life in the world around us. In short, taking a meal with someone can become a once-in-a-lifetime experience. I hope that there will be many such during your lifetime.

I was thinking about this as I read the gospel for this Sunday. It's a story describing an experience that, without doubt, actually took place. Let us title it: Unexpected Supper With a Stranger.

Two friends of Jesus are heading home to Emmaus, their village, shortly after the passion and crucifixion of Jesus. They are in solemn conversation, trying to make some sense of all the sad events that had recently taken place. All the promises of the coming kingdom that Jesus promised and that they were still hoping for now seemed totally lost.

As they are walking along, they noticed that a stranger had caught up with them and asks them what they have been discussing. Assuming that the stranger had not heard what had recently taken place in Jerusalem, they proceed to describe for him what had happened to Jesus of Nazareth. The stranger, in turn, proceeds to suggest that if they were to consult the Hebrew Scriptures they would know that all this had to take place; it was clearly predicted in the Law and the prophets.

As they approached their home village of Emmaus, the two friends invite the stranger to remain with them and share supper; they obviously wished to learn more from him regarding the death of Jesus of Nazareth.

So, as they are finally assembled at table together, the stranger pronounced the traditional Jewish table blessing, broke the bread and handed each of them a portion. It was at that point that they suddenly remembered what had happened only a few days earlier at the Last Supper. "They came to know Jesus once again in the breaking of the bread."

Retracing our steps now to the evening of the Last Supper, we can recall what Jesus said then as he shared the bread and the cup: "When you do this," he said, "remember me." I am sure that most Christians today will recall those very words each time they share Communion together.

Having heard that story of the supper at Emmaus, we might also wish to ask the deeper meaning and implications of other suppers that we have taken together so often. Meals, it seems to me, have an unequalled quality about them; they are not simply a time for eating and drinking. Rather, I think, they are also moments when we have the opportunity to discover that there is something sacred going on here. The others eating with us are the presence of Christ to us; in their presence we have the opportunity to remember Jesus Christ once again. In short, this story tells us that every meal is holy; every meal puts us in touch with the One who asks nothing more than to be remembered until he comes again. Yes, all this can take place even this evening when you will gather with someone to share macaroni and cheese and a glass of iced tea.

The Lord Is Risen Indeed

"Surprise! Jesus is alive!" The two travelers from Emmaus, who had just entertained the risen Savior in their home, were greeted by the disciples with the news that the Lord was no longer in the tomb.

How strange that the news of Jesus' resurrection should be a surprise. He had told them repeatedly that He would rise after 3 days (Matt. 26:61; Mark. 8:31; John. 2:19). Yet when Jesus was crucified, His disciples were filled with gloom and despair, though they should have been joyously and expectantly waiting for Him to rise.

Resurrection day is a day of joy and victory! But on that first resurrection day there was gloom and sadness before the disciples realized Jesus was alive. Mark's Gospel tells us that they "mourned and wept", but they should have been rejoicing.

It is the resurrection that gives meaning to the cross. The death of Christ alone is bad news, but followed by His rising from the dead it is good news. Why? Jesus took our sins to Calvary. Had He atoned for all but one, He would still be in the tomb. His resurrection is the assurance that the work is finished. God was satisfied, and He demonstrated it by raising Jesus from the grave.

Hallelujah! The Lord is risen indeed!

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!

Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!

Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!

Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia! —Wesley

**Live as if Christ died yesterday,
arose this morning,
and is coming back tomorrow!**