

We continue the story of Emmaus, and the Lukan theme of stories retold unfolds even further. I think it's important to state that none of us needs to wait for a mystical encounter or a vision of the risen Lord before we start the task of understanding our lives in the new Easter way. The deeds of God in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are already there, and the witness of the apostles provides us all with the encounter we need; we are met in the Apostolic Church today, to recognise the Lord in the breaking of the bread.

What is necessary, however, is the understanding of what celebrating Easter involves for us. We can't celebrate it as a memory of the past, or a tangle of religious themes, or a piece of enjoyable theatre. We must do it as a Jew does Passover, with our travelling-clothes on, standing ready, with staffs in our hands for the journey that lies before us. No-one can try to celebrate Easter with the notion of staying the same as before. The struggle of Lent, and the faithful work of the Sacred Triduum, is a difficult ascent: but it's the ascent of a diving-board, or the back entrance of a ski-run. If we reached the top and stood there admiring the view, we would very much miss the point. It is time to launch ourselves off, and see where the dive, or the Grand Slalom, is going to take us.

The life we used to live, that now lies behind us, is exposed to our gaze in a new way. Much of it may seem worthless or irrelevant; some of it may appear as "experiences which now only make us blush". But Jesus Christ doesn't want us to stand here blushing, however furiously. This is the past from which we need to jump off, renouncing it and leaving it behind. The consoling words of Peter ring in our ears:

*Now I know, brothers, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing: this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, when he said through all his prophets that Christ would suffer. Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, and so that the Lord may send the time of comfort.*

This reminds us of the prayer of Luke's Jesus:

*Father forgive them; they do not know what they are doing.*

It is in the reworking of our minds, and the genuine decision to live according to the new hope we have received, that we find ourselves laying hold of the real flesh of the risen Christ, and the resurrection comes home in our real life. Then we can sense that we have truly crossed from death to life, and say:

*The Lord is risen indeed, alleluia.*