

“already received their reward.” (cf. Mt 6: 2,5,16) What reward? Nothing, more vanity.

Only love softens us. Only love changes our hearts. Only love makes us different. ***All You Need is Love***, what a famous song by the Beatles. And it’s true, all we need is love. If we have love we have everything and if we don’t have love, we have nothing. People are desperately looking for love. Test your heart. Examine yourself, why do you do what you do? Why do we all have the emotions and feelings that we have? Everyone is always looking for love. The question is: not if we are looking for love, but where are we looking for love? Jesus wants to give you love. He wants to give you His love; this is what the disciples experienced: **“they said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?’”** (Lk 24:32). These are the last words Jesus spoke before going to his Passion and crucifixion: **“I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them”** (Jn 17:26).

Christian life is learning to remain in the love of God, in the Holy Spirit. This means to be a child of God. We look for love when we are little, which comes from our parents when we are little which is normal and good, because they occupy the place of God. When we turn around 12 years old, or reach puberty, we continue to look for love only now we are on our own and we turn to our thoughts and emotions for love, not God, which is immature, childish and selfishness itself.

Faith is about the love God has for us. That’s all, but receiving love from God means being humble, little and poor and this is the problem, that we are little, poor and weak but we don’t like to recognize it and accept it, and that is called humility, the truth about ourselves. This is the cross that we need to embrace, this is this our lack of love and our need for love. God does the rest.

## **II. JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN TODAY:** (Anonymous Monk)

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia,  
our triumphant holy day; alleluia,  
who did once upon the cross; alleluia,  
suffer to redeem our loss; alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing; Alleluia,  
unto Christ our heavenly king: Alleluia,  
who endured the cross and grave: Alleluia,  
sinners to redeem and save: Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured: Alleluia,  
our salvation have procured: Alleluia,  
now above the sky he's King: Alleluia,  
where the angels ever sing: Alleluia!



**Fr. Armando Marsal, DCJM.**

## **‘I CAME TO BRING FIRE’**

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER, APRIL 26<sup>th</sup>**

“That very day, the first day of the week, two of Jesus’ disciples were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.

And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing as you walk along?”

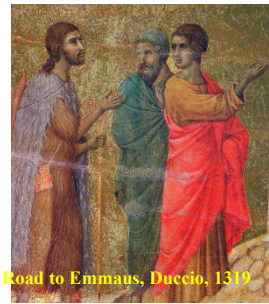
They stopped, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?”

And he replied to them, “What sort of things?” They said to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see.”

And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures.

As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther. But they urged him, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?”

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!” Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.” (Lk 24:13-35)



## I. HOW SLOW OF THE HEART IS TO BELIEVE:

**Petition:** O Good Shepherd, You always accompany me and take care of me; don't let me be blind or deaf to You even though the events and circumstances of my life try and push me way. Don't let my biases, my selfishness and stubbornness of heart deny me the faith that is enlightened by Your presence and guidance in my life.



How many times did Jesus announce his Passion, death and Resurrection to his disciples? How many times throughout our lives has Jesus said to each of us, as He said to the two disciples of Emmaus: *"Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"* (Lk 24:25)

The encounter Jesus had with the two disciples who were leaving their community, walking away downcast, sad and discouraged is very instructive for our own lukewarm faith, our apathy and sometimes disinterest for spiritual life, and for all things related to God and prayer.

Some of us had, in the beginning or even sometime later in our religious-spiritual life, an experience of great desire and joy; we were full of hope and courage about our relationship with Jesus and about being holy, and then it fades away. Why do these dispositions disappear and fade away?

Maybe our interest in Jesus and his love was so great that in the moment we put God first, we understood His love for us and His mercy, and we were able to grasp a piece of Who He is and how much He can do for us in our lives, but then there is that moment that we lose our hope.

Who knows the reason; maybe our sins, our failures, the worldly and carnal allurements or other selfish desires and with them the dryness, the lack of intensity, having loads of distractions and boring moments in our prayer etc. and all or some of this has brought us discouragement. Now we still follow Jesus, but without the enthusiasm; following Jesus has become a chore, almost a burden, a penance, something that doesn't thrill us or attract us.

How can we recover our initial enthusiasm, our first desires, our intimate relationships with God in Jesus Christ?

First, let's examine the two disciples who were walking away from their community, the Church. Remember, we need others to help us live our faith; we are created for living in communion with others, especially in moments of weakness or temptation, of doubts and hesitation. When we are tempted, we should never make rash decisions. We cannot let our thinking, our imaginations or our memories to allow us to deny our faith. If we do, in that very moment we close our hearts to God; we deny hope and charity and all the spiritual building we have done falls apart. These disciples when they recovered, the first thing

they did was turn back to the community. *"So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven."* (Lk 24:33)

Second, these two men were living in their own thoughts, they were having their own expectations about God, and the Messiah and now that He was gone how disappointed they were. They had lost their hope, *"we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel."* (Lk 24:21) Their hope was founded in their own thoughts, things that had happened to them and these were not according to the will of the Messiah.

Third, they didn't wait, they had no patience.

Jesus reproached them and their lack of wisdom and faith in the words of God. *"Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!"* (Lk 24:25)

Jesus then taught them the necessity of the Cross for coming to glory. The Cross and the Resurrection are the essence of Christian life. Baptism is to die for living, the Beatitudes, the conditions for bearing fruit, the conditions for love, the condition of following Jesus, the condition of virtues. *"Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"* (Lk 24:26) Being a Christian means embracing the Cross with Jesus. What cross? Your cross. Without embracing one's cross there is no human growth; the only thing that grows is our own selfishness, pride, vanity, etc. If we embrace the Cross we will see that things are easy, that we grow every day and that we get to know God better and deeper each and every day.

The Cross is not so much an external fact, but an internal fact; it is our need of denying our egocentric self, for growing in love. The plan of God is simple, very simple: the union with Him through love; a union is achieved in doing His will and for that we need to deny our egocentric and selfish will's that are only about me and only me; it is about others and in the measure that they give us something that we desire; that we get something of interest from them and so they do our will. The will of God however, is our holiness, our union with Him; our will is more "ego" and only about us.

## II. HEARTS BURNING WHILE JESUS SPEAKS:

**Petition:** Jesus You brought fire to the world. You want to baptize us in Spirit and fire, You want us to burn with Your love; we are created for becoming that fire, the fire of love that consume all selfishness and pride; speak to me, I beg you Jesus, with Your language of love so that my heart can burn with the same fire of the Spirit. Only fire free us from selfishness. Our hearts are hardened because we look for love in the wrong places and in the wrong people and when anyone is looking for love out of God they are moved by pride, vanity, greediness, lust, envy, etc. and what's worse is that they've

