

Throughout our daily lives we often experience the unforgettable moments ... those memories that remain in our heart forever. For example, when a baby was born and I embraced that child in my arms for the first time, I experienced an eye-opening moment filled with awe and joy. I was raised in a Christian family and trained at a Seminary, but I did not have a strong sense of a call into ministry until I recommitted my life to Jesus Christ. Following my college graduation in Seoul, my family immigrated to this country; and I was given the educational opportunity to continue my study at Drew Theological School in New Jersey. In the meantime, I was told to attend a spiritual retreat called Tres Dias (similar to the Walk to Emmaus). During that retreat, I experienced a spiritually awakening experience that led me to re-commit my life to Christ for the sake of His kingdom; that spiritual experience enabled me to pursue becoming a faithful servant of God. That Tres Dias spiritual retreat was an eye-opening experience for me; Christ Jesus encountered me, and I came to confess that Jesus Christ was my personal Savior as well as the Lord of my life.

**The Risen Christ walks along with us.**

Two disciples (anonymous) of Jesus Christ were walking down the road to Emmaus from Jerusalem; it was three days after Jesus was crucified. They were sad and disappointed with the death of Jesus because they followed him as Messiah. On the road they were talking about Jesus and how he was treated by the religious leaders. During their conversation, one thing they did not recognize was that Jesus was also walking with them. (At Richardson Park, I often see people talking with each other while they are walking. Imagine someone appears to you while you are talking about him or her.) The Bible says, "While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (Luke 24:15-16). Jesus even asked them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" (v.17). "Are you *the only stranger* in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days? (v.18)

I often do not recognize a person's name or face. During my graduation ceremony, I met my old college friends who went to school with me. A quarter century has passed since I saw them at school. At first I could not recognize them, and later I greeted them gladly.

Not only our physical eyes, but we also do not recognize our Lord Jesus with our spiritual eyes: spiritual sleeping or spiritual blindness. The risen Christ comes to us, talks to us, and walks with us during our journey of life.

**His Word and Bread enable us to see the Risen Christ.**

Their conversation continued during their journey: their hope and great disappointment, the resurrection story, and recent news updates on Easter Day. "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" (v. 26) That Jesus' words surprise me. The risen Christ looked impatiently at the slowness of his

disciples: slow in understanding what he said and slow to recognize who he was. Then he taught them who he was from the Scripture.

Preparing and planning for the coming of VBS, I pray that more children would come and learn about Jesus: who he is and what he did for them. I encourage you to invite not only your own children and grandchildren, but also children in our community to church. Why don't you become a VBS ambassador? When I recall my childhood, my Sunday school experience, (especially my VBS experience) is one of my unforgettable eye-opening experiences. (Jean Alsko's testimony). Also, children can embrace God's love and grace as they receive the bread and drink from the cup during Holy Communion. They are all means of grace ... ways that we can be touched and nurtured by God.

Learning God's Word as well as taking bread enables our spiritual eyes to be open and encounter Jesus Christ. The spiritual eyes of those two disciples were opened and they recognized the risen Christ. "Then their eyes were opened and *they recognized him*; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was opening the scriptures to us?" (vv. 31-32)

### **The Risen Christ encounters us on the road.**

Lastly, let's look at where it happened –on the road. We always walk or drive our cars in our community; many roads are connected with each other such as Main Street, Wilson Street, Pittsburgh Street, Beallsville Road, or even Route 40. The road means the place where we are living –home, workplace, school, and market. The risen Christ visits us and meets us at our specific place and life situation. But many times we do not recognize him although he walks beside us. He wants to help us in times of need; He comforts us when we are down and He strengthens us to go through the many difficulties we are faced with in life – family issues, physical sickness, relationship problems, and even financial problems.

Two roads are mentioned at today's text: down the road to Emmaus and the upward road to Jerusalem. I would say the road to Emmaus is the road of the World – the world without Jesus Christ and the road to Jerusalem is the road to God – the faith community in which we can experience God together.

Which road are you traveling –Emmaus or Jerusalem? Are you getting closer to God by learning about Jesus and joining church ministries? Or are you drifting away from God by..

The risen Christ walks beside you during your journey of life whether you are aware of him or not. Your awareness that Jesus is with you requires faith and the conviction that the Lord leads your life. The risen Christ enables us to know Him as we open our hearts to Him always. Amen

**Third, the risen Christ greets us when we returned to Him through faith community. Belonging to church...**

**Jesus walks ahead of us, walking with us.**

**I was raised in a Christian family and trained at a Seminary but I did not have a strong sense of call into ministry until I met Jesus Christ personally. Following my school in Seoul my family immigrated to this country and I came to have an educational opportunity to continue my study at Drew Theological School in New Jersey. In the meantime, I was told to attend a spiritual retreat: Tres Dias (Walk to Emmaus). During that retreat, I experienced spiritual awakening experience. I re-committed my life to Christ and made a decision to become a faithful servant of God – pastor -through the second chance of theological education. That Tres Dias spiritual retreat was an eye opening experience for me in terms of encountering Christ as my Savior as well as the Lord of my life.**

**You might have experienced a similar feeling. When I joined oversees mission team to Peru, flew a small airplane, landed a tribal village in the center of Amazon jungle, and saw village people, it was an eye opening experience. While our medical team members took care of tribal people, I distributed candies and cross to one by one. Not only giving them our gifts, I hugged each of them out of Christian love and prayed for them. That experience opened my eyes to see so many people who never heard the good news of Jesus Christ.**