



### REFLECTION FROM MELBOURNE ARCHDIOCESAN WEBSITE FOR EASTER WEEK THREE

The disciples on the road to Emmaus witness the risen Lord, who discloses to them the Scripture passages predicting his saving death. On their return journey, and in the subsequent weeks, what would Cleopas and his wife have made of this encounter with the risen Lord? How might it have changed them? American Scripture scholar Daniel Harrington identifies several important implications of such an encounter with the risen Christ. The first, and most fundamental, is the proclamation that death is not the end. Cleopas and his wife must have assumed that if the Father can raise Jesus from the dead, he can raise them too! Now, in the person of Jesus, they can see that human life extends beyond this life. They can begin to see the essential relationship between their current lives and their eternal destiny. Second, the story of salvation won for us in the Christ event lifts up the precious value of human life. We see that our human story has a unique dignity and trajectory. No longer are we struggling in a cosmic wilderness. We live in God's homeland, and our lives have a certain transcendent value. The Easter story reminded Cleopas and his wife of their own worth in God's eyes. Life as they previously knew it ended in death; now life has a divine element. Through association with the risen Lord, we have a richer life, and the value of every human being has been enhanced by this miracle of God's grace. Third, these 'Easter Sunday strollers' might have recalled the central message of Jesus' sermons, parables and actions: a call to selfless love. This new awareness became emblematic of the followers of Christ and their actions. Jesus continually identified love as the crucial element in all human life, and his love was the model for all, exemplified in his washing the disciples' feet before celebrating his last Passover meal. Finally, the Emmaus disciples might have already heard from the Calvary witnesses the amazing account of Jesus' final forgiveness—how the dying Christ forgave his executioners and those taunting him and promised a condemned criminal entry into God's kingdom. The cross, a potent Roman image of oppression and barbaric torture had become a symbol of the love of Christ—a love that even extends to his enemies. The followers of Christ begin to see that oppressed people never resort to evil to gain their victory. Peaceful protest is the model for addressing human injustice. • Since death is not the end of our lives, what does that mean for my existence today? • I wonder how the Easter event deepens my appreciation of all human life. • How can I make selfless love an emblem of all my actions? • To what extent am I able to forgive others from my heart?

Jesus Christ, Meet us on the road and open our eyes to your presence among us. May our hearts so burn within us that we long to share your self-giving love with others. Amen.