

*They urged him strongly, saying,
“Stay with us.”*



*Diego Velázquez, Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus
Public domain*

PERSONAL AND COMMUNAL PRAYER

DARING HOSPITALITY: AS GUESTS

Gathering Hymn: One of your own choosing – a suggestion: John Foley’s *Come to the Water*

Welcome into the Circle of Prayer:

I saw a stranger today.
 I put food for him in the eating-place
 and drink in the drinking-place
 and music in the listening-place.
In the Holy name of the Trinity
 he blessed myself and my family.
And the lark said in her warble
 often, often, often
 goes Christ in the stranger's guise.
 O, oft and oft and oft,
 goes Christ in the stranger's guise.

Carmina Gadelica, “Celtic Rune of Hospitality”

Readings:

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Is 55:1-2

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.’

 So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 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 talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’

Luke 24:28-32

Get a good cup of tea – I think the community room would be a good place.

Catherine McAuley

Today, perhaps more than ever, welcoming the stranger, welcoming the other, welcoming the unknown, welcoming what we don’t understand, welcoming the one of who we are afraid — this is not easy. We tell ourselves comforting stories about why we should or shouldn’t welcome this or that person, pay attention or be concerned with another, be justified or entitled to fear or despise another, but the journey on the Road to Emmaus tells us something very different. . . The disciples encounter Christ in the welcoming of a stranger and, likewise, we encounter Christ in the other when we, like these two believers, open our hearts to the experience of relationship with those we encounter on our own journeys — especially those we may not wish to encounter.

Franciscan Spirituality in the 21st Century

Response:

The Servant-Girl at Emmaus (A Painting by Velázquez)

She listens, listens, holding
her breath. Surely that voice
is his - the one who had looked at her, once, across the crowd,
as no one ever had looked?
Had seen her? Had spoken as if to her?
Surely those hands were his,
taking the platter of bread from hers just now?
Hands he'd laid on the dying and made them well?
Surely that face - ?

The man they'd crucified for sedition and blasphemy.
The man whose body disappeared from its tomb.
The man it was rumored now some women had seen
this morning, alive?

Those who had brought this stranger home to their table
don't recognize yet with whom they sit.
But she in the kitchen, absently touching the wine jug
she's to take in,
a young Black servant intently listening,
wings round and sees
the light around him
and is sure.

Denise Levertov

Personal and Shared Reflection: Often as in the Emmaus story, Jesus is the guest, the stranger, not the host. When and where am I the stranger who is welcomed? How do I feel about being a receiver of hospitality rather than being a giver of hospitality? What does being a guest mean for being Sisters of Mercy in the 21st century?

Blessing: *Pilgrims on the Road*

We are once again pilgrims on the road to Emmaus . . .
Our heads are bowed as we meet the Stranger
who draws near and comes with us.
As evening comes, we strain to make out His face
while he talks to us, to our hearts.

In interpreting the Book of Life,
He takes our broken hopes and kindles them into fire:
the way becomes lighter as, drawing the embers together,
we learn to fan the flame.

If we invite Him this evening, He will sit down
and together we shall share the meal.
And then all those who no longer believed
will see and the hour of recognition will come.
He will break the bread of tears at the table of the poor
and each will receive manna to their fill.

We shall return to Jerusalem to proclaim aloud
what He has whispered in our ear.
And no doubt we shall find brothers and sisters there who will greet us with the words:
 'We, too, have met Him!'
For we know: the mercy of God
has come to visit the land of the living!

Brother Roger Schutz of Taizé