



# Emmaus: Recognizing the Risen Lord A Meal Ritual

## Table Center

Sandal (well worn) and a loaf of bread

## Preparation

Prepare a casserole dish whose contents are "hard" to recognize at first, such as a hamburger casserole disguised by cheese or a chicken based casserole buried beneath mashed potatoes or a tuna casserole buried beneath some crunchy chow mien noodles. Serve a carrot salad ("a carrot a day keeps the optometrist away") and some rolls.

## Note

For the litany during the "We Gather" part of the meal you may want to invite someone to read the petitions/litany.

## ✝ We Gather...

*Share with those gathered...*

Today we are gathered to share the story of two apostles journeying to Emmaus after Jesus died and rose from the dead. They were discouraged and probably grieving the loss of their messiah, as they were not feeling confident that Jesus had actually risen from the dead. In some senses, they were blinded by their grief, and by an inability to imagine that Jesus had conquered death and was now present to them in a new way. We too have moments of doubt, fear, and grief

during which we find it difficult to recognize and celebrate Jesus with us. So we begin our meal this evening with a litany of seeing.

I invite you to respond to each petition with the phrase: "Open my eyes Lord, help me to see your face..."

- ✝ When I am blinded by fear...
- ✝ When I am blinded by selfishness...
- ✝ When I am blinded by busyness...
- ✝ When I am blinded by despair...
- ✝ When I am blinded by hatred...
- ✝ When I am blinded by doubt...
- ✝ When I am blinded by loneliness...
- ✝ When I am blinded by mistrust...

*We pray...*

Jesus you promised us that you would be with us for all time. Bless us with faithful perseverance to seek you in all people and places. We ask this in the power of your name, Amen.

## ✝ We Tell the Story...

*Invite someone to proclaim the Gospel reading of the Emmaus Story...*

That same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they were talking and

thinking about what had happened, Jesus came near and started walking along beside them. But they did not know who he was.

Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about as you walked along?"

The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy. Then the one named Cleopas asked Jesus, "Are you the only person from Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening there these last few days?"

"What do you mean?" Jesus asked.

They answered: Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. By what he did and said he showed that he was a powerful prophet, who pleased God and all the people. Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened.

Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some men from our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they didn't see Jesus either.

Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said? Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?" Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets.

When the two of them came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. They begged him, "Stay with us! It's already late, and

the sun is going down." So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.

After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. They said to each other, "When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn't it warm our hearts?" So they got right up and returned to Jerusalem.

The two disciples found the eleven apostles and the others gathered together. And they learned from the group that the Lord was really alive and had appeared to Peter. Then the disciples from Emmaus told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread. (Luke 24:13-35)

*After the reading and a few moments of reflection time, invite those gathered to share a time when they recognized Jesus in their lives. When did Jesus show up announced or unannounced?*

## **✚ We Share a Meal...**

*Place the meal on the table*

*Pray together...*

We pray now in thanksgiving for the food you have blessed us with. May we be reminded as we share it that all is gift. Like the apostles on the road to Emmaus, may we also be blessed to recognize Jesus in our breaking of bread together. Amen.

*If you are sharing a casserole that has been "disguised" by a topping invite everyone to guess what it is...can anyone "recognize" its contents or does it have to be "explored" just as Jesus explored the scriptures with the two apostles on the road to Emmaus.*

*As the meal is being shared, invite those gathered at the table to discuss:*

- Can you remember other stories of Jesus sharing a meal with people? Which ones can you remember?
- What meals have you shared with family and or friends that you would say, "we recognized the presence of Jesus as we broke bread together"?

## **✚ We Go Forth...**

*Conclude by saying...*

We leave our meal today with a challenge to keep our eyes wide open—to see the

gift of Christ all around us. I challenge you this week to make note, either by drawing pictures or by writing a list for yourself of the many times you were gifted with "recognition"— seeing the presence of Christ before you.

*We pray...*

God of light and source of all blessing, bless us with faith and perseverance to see your gift of Jesus in every aspect of our lives. Send your Spirit upon us that we may see with your eyes, love with your love, and heal with your grace. Amen.

