

Gleaning In The Fields Of Light

The Journey Toward Emmaus

By Ken Woodley

The Road to Emmaus is all around us.

There is no set formal path. No particular interstate highway or country lane.

The Road to Emmaus just is—stretching out in every direction.

North. South. East. And west.

We journey upon it each day, whether we realize it or not. Every paved mile that we drive is upon the Road to Emmaus. Each sidewalk step that we take is upon the Road to Emmaus.

Left, right, left.

Through the woods.

Across a field.

Upstairs and down.

The Road to Emmaus is, consciously or not, part of the journey to every destination we consciously try to reach.

For our entire life.

Forward, or backward, day by day.

Curiously, however, we often fail to sense its presence. There are so many distractions along the way. One moment we are deep in contemplative prayer and the next we suddenly find ourselves in the middle of life's often tumultuous cacophony of noises.

We become like the two disciples described in the Gospel of Luke, walking toward Emmaus and so busy talking about the crucifixion of Jesus and rumors of his resurrection that they fail to see that he is walking right there beside them.

The experience is not unlike walking out from a forest of wondrous peace onto the Las Vegas strip.

But even Vegas is part of the Road to Emmaus.

The Road to Emmaus is everywhere—no exceptions.

And Jesus is there—no exceptions.

Jesus is there, waiting for us to recognize him.

Waiting for us to recognize him in our hearts.

To recognize him in our souls.

To recognize him in each other when we walk his footsteps into the world.

Every day and every step we take hold such promise.

Every day and every step offer us the chance to make the dreams that Jesus has for us come true in this world that so desperately needs those dreams to come true.

But how?

Sometimes, we just need to pull over into a spiritual rest stop and let the tumultuous cacophony of the world's traffic of distractions wash over us and away.

Often, we most readily recognize the Road to Emmaus—and who journeys upon it by our side—only when we stop for a moment to look around and feel the scenery of our soul and the sunrise of our hearts burning within us.

That is when Jesus is able to “break bread” with us, even if there is not a crumb or a crust or a loaf in sight.

Quite possibly, however, another person *is* by your side, walking the same steps on the Road to Emmaus. In close proximity physically, but also close in the spirit of friendship or love. So close that it is as if the two of you are one single loaf of bread. It can happen right here in the middle of a service or service project at St. Anne's. In opening up your hearts to each other—in breaking this human bread—Jesus is able to reveal his presence among you in a way that is impossibly palpable.

And there is true communion.

Even at this time of COVID-19 when so many of us are working remotely from home, staying sheltered and perhaps even completely alone. We're not going anywhere unless it's absolutely necessary.

But that changes nothing.

Because the Road to Emmaus is almost entirely inside us.