



# Easter – Tide

## On the Road to Emmaus

*From The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke for the Mass appointed for  
Easter Monday*

*St. Luke; Ch. 24, Verse 13.*

**Text:** “ *Abide with us, (Lord) for the day is far spent and the night is at hand.*”

Today I have taken a little *pastoral liscence*, if that is indeed a proper ecclesiastical term, and have chosen instead of the Gospel appointed for this day, that being the Gospel according to St. John (Jn. Ch. 10, Vs 11) which speaks about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and chose the Gospel story about the two disciples and their encounter with Christ on their journey along the road to Emmaus, a Gospel account that has been assigned for Monday in Easter week. Because of its placement in our calendar, this Gospel account may not be as familiar as the other events that took place on Easter Day...but it is a beautiful story in itself, and is well worth becoming familiar with...if only at the very least...for the profound prayer that is contained within it.

Amid the words of this lovely Easter narrative is the simple invocation:  
***“Abide with us, for the day is far spent and the night is at hand.”***

Abide with us, O Lord! ... This is the cry of a soul who has found God and never again wishes to be separated from Him. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we too, must go out in search for the Lord. Our whole life should be a continuous journey in search of Him...but how often are we like the two disciples, sad because we do not succeed in finding Him. Because not understanding His mysterious ways, it seems that He has abandoned us.

The two disciples in today's Gospel, had made for themselves an image of Christ which did not in any way correspond to the reality. When they saw Him die, something of their faith and confidence in Him died also. The same thing often happens to us when we do not obtain that for which we pray.

*“We had trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.”* said one of the disciples, frustrated by the death of Jesus, and not perceiving that Jesus, at that *very moment* when they were close to giving up all their hope...was right there close by them, disguised as a fellow traveler.  
*“...while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and*

*went with them. But their eyes were not holden that they should not know him.”*

How often have we experienced this ourselves? Hidden in the obscurity of faith, God draws near to our souls, makes Himself our traveling companion, and even more, He lives in us by grace.

True, that as we make our earthly pilgrimage, He does not reveal Himself to us “face to face”... a vision that is reserved for eternity. At best, we can see Him only.... as the Evangelist writes: “*Through a glass, though darkly*” (I Cor. Ch. 13, Vs 12).

Nevertheless, God knows how to make Himself known. To us, just as to the disciples at Emmaus, His presence is revealed in an obscure manner, yes...but unmistakably, because of the unique ardor which He puts into our hearts.

To quote one of the disciples: “*Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?*”

The soul who has found the Lord even but once in this manner, not outside of itself...but within itself...living and acting in its heart, cannot but fail to cry out to Him: ***Abide with me!***

Yet, dear friends, this cry is already heard...it is already a permanent reality, because God ***always*** dwells within a soul that is in the state of grace. God is there and remains with us...*it is for us to remain with Him.*

Prayer and reception of the Sacraments are the tools which we can use to accomplish this. In our prayers, let us ask our Blessed Lord:

*“Teach us, O Lord, to stay with you, to live with you.”*

The words of today's Gospel text, forms one of the shortest but most meaningful and lovely prayers we can use in our evening devotions. I first heard these words used in prayer when I was an acolyte, serving at St. Paul's in Portland. It was just before we were about to begin the beautiful service of *Evensong and Benediction*. Before we departed the sacristy, the priest-celebrant at that time, Fr. MacElwain would give us a nod and we would

become silent for a moment and center ourselves for what we were about to offer. To our minds, the mundane was set aside, and the office was officially begun when the priest humbly prayed: ***“Abide with us, Lord, for the day is far-spent and the night is at hand.”***

The spirit of great monastic office of *Vespers* which is chanted in monasteries around the world with majestic tone and various elements of: antiphony, psalmody, and hymnody... can all be summed up in this short prayer.

The intent of the Prayer-Book office of *Evening Prayer* which we have been recently learning how to pray, can also be summed up by this same little prayer.

As the day draws to a close, and as we prepare to put an end to another often-busy day, where more often than not, there was not enough time for spiritual reflection, we can easily sum things up, by the recitation of this Gospel verse as a little prayer. It calls upon our Lord, to be with us at the day's end...to instill in us that peace that comes with even-tide.

I invite you to commit this little verse to mind for use at such times, when you think that you have left no time for prayer. The Lord will hear it, and like He did to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus...will reveal Himself to you

The two disciples heading to Emmaus were shaken by the events of the preceding days. Their faith was all but gone. To them, comes Jesus, and He shows them the glory of God in sacrifice...in sympathy...in service.

He shows them that the death on Calvary was the greatest thing the world had ever seen; ... and rather than a defeat...it was the greatest of victories. When finally, His Real Presence had been revealed to them in the breaking of the bread, these same men were able to go back to Jerusalem from which they had fled, and to find the others who had seen through the chaos, the glory of God.

As we prepare once again to receive the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; let us also echo the words of those two disciples:

*“Abide with us, Lord!”*

