

# He's Alive!!

There's a painting in the back of St. Leo's church of Jesus breaking bread with the disciples he revealed himself to as they walked together on the road to Emmaus. The artist, the late Father Jim Hasse, SJ used parishioners as models, a reminder that Jesus is always present, among, in, and with us as we journey through life.

Enter that scene if you will, and imagine what it would have been like if you were one of those disciples. You are sad and depressed and sharing your grief and dashed hopes with your friends. How could this have happened? Jesus was a prophet, a healer, a good friend. He came into our homes. We shared meals. He laughed and wept with us. He changed our lives. Things were going to get better. We thought he was the Messiah and would save Israel. Now all of that has changed.

As we are talking a stranger walks up joins us and asks us about our conversation. Where has he been?? How can he not know what had happened? Everyone is talking about it.

"Are you the only one in Israel who doesn't know what's been going on," we ask and then begin to pour out our sense of loss and hopelessness. Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people was handed over to a sentence of death and crucified by our chief priests and rulers. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see."

"It's over. Jesus is dead. Even the body is gone. There's nothing to hope for. Can you see now why we are upset?" And in the face of our grief, the stranger gently confronts us and says, "You really don't get it. Look at the Scriptures. From as early as Moses the

prophets told us that the Messiah had to die. Jesus' death isn't a surprise. And it's not the end."

Who is this guy we wonder and how can he possibly say it's not the end. Doesn't he understand how broken-hearted we are? Maybe if we spend more time with him he'll get it, but he says he was going to another place. "Come on," we say, "just a little bit longer. Have dinner with us. It's getting late and darkness is descending." Reluctantly, it seems to us, he agrees. The meal's before us now and as we eat something is starting to feel very familiar. We look up and notice he is taking bread and blessing it. Didn't Jesus do that the last time we were together at Passover? It can't be or maybe, just maybe it is Jesus. That would be too good to be true. He looks at us. His eyes are filled with love. It's him! It really is Jesus! Joy is swelling in our hearts. It really isn't over. Jesus is alive. "Stay with us," we plead but he disappears from our sight into the darkness. Still we know he is still with us and always will be.



This news is too good to just keep to ourselves—we have seen Jesus. We recognized him in the breaking of the bread. We run back and tell the others.

Imagining got us into a sense of what it was like for those early disciples then, but Jesus is also walking with us and revealing himself to us through the Eucharist where God reminds us that God's love for us is so intense that God wants to feed us and become part of our very bodies through the bread and wine. That's a mind-blowing reality. God also is present with us and nourishes us in and through the body of our faith community as we gather to pray and work together. God is with and in us every moment of every day continuing to feed and surprise us in unexpected people and events.

He's alive and so are we alive in him—Alleluia!

—Angela Anno

*"We Christians believe and know that Christ's resurrection is the true hope of the world, the hope that does not disappoint."*

—Pope Francis

