



*Ambassadors of a*  
**WORLDWIDE BROTHERHOOD**

**MEDITATION 6 (August 11, 2011)**

**After a day of silence and a day of reconciliation, we are going on our way, figuratively as well as literally. We are allowed to join the Emmaus travellers. The disappointments can be told openly. What you had hoped for may be said out loud. What do you recognize in each other? What do we still want to share with each other before we continue on our way, and in fact even to Madrid. How do we celebrate with each other the good things we have discovered? By means of the Scriptures? By having mutual conversations? By breaking the bread with each other?**

- **Lectio:** Luke 24: 9-35

9 Then they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others.

10 The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; the others who accompanied them also told this to the apostles,

11 but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them.

12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, bent down, and saw the burial cloths alone; then he went home amazed at what had happened.

13 Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,

14 and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.

15 And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,

16 but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.

17 He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast.

18 One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?"

19 And he replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. 21 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.

22 Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning

23 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.

24 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."

25 And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!

26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer <sup>8</sup> these things and enter into his glory?"

27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them what referred to him in all the scriptures.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

29 But they urged him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." So he went

in to stay with them.

30 And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.

31 With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

32 Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

33 So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them 34 who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

- **Meditatio**

We are in the midst of the Easter story in the Gospel of Luke. The angels did appear to the women announcing to them the Easter Gospel. The women, who have seen everything, are going to tell the other disciples the news. There confusion comes about and this becomes worse, because the others consider it simply rubbish. Women talk in the worst sense of the word. The position of women in those times was not to be envied. It is clear, and becomes even more clear, that the apostles do not consider the testimony of the women believable. And that is still the way it is now. The Easter Gospel is contested by many people.

Yet there is one who wants to find out for himself: Peter. The others seem to remain aloof.

Two do leave, for Emmaus. Thus the group which was united in Jerusalem, disintegrates. The Easter Gospel divides and sows confusion. Two do go to find out. The picture in Luke's Gospel is clear. This Gospel according to Luke is a Gospel of the road. The first Christians were also called people of the road. In other words, the theme of 'the road' is very important. Together with Jesus we are on the way, on the road toward his glorification. Also now two are on their way. They are allowed to follow their own learning process. Literally along the way.

While on their way, they start arguing vehemently with each other. They are eager to understand and comprehend what did happen. But then a stranger joins them. The nice aspect of this is that now they are allowed to state their own memories. That turns out to bring about its own irritation, because they cannot understand that anybody is not aware of what did happen in Jerusalem. What to them was the most important event in the whole world was simply not at all noticed by somebody else. How can that be? But how often do we ourselves not discover that somebody else did not even notice what you found so important.

Notwithstanding their anger, they allow the stranger to join them. Probably because he is willing to listen to them. Being together on the road and then being able to tell your story, including all the small details which probably have no meaning for an outsider. They express their hope. And that reveals what caused their great disappointment. How will this affect the liberation of Israel? It does not become clear what picture they actually have of that. Generally speaking, people assume: the liberation from the yoke of the Romans. That was usually the case. However, it is clear – and that is precisely what Jesus does blame them for – that they do not really understand the situation. Their lack of understanding of what did happen to Jesus becomes most evident when they start talking of the third day. While they are walking along with Jesus, they show how blind they are. They did not understand what the predictions of Jesus' suffering were all about.

Jesus holds their hand as it were in order to go through a learning process together. While on the road, Jesus explains to them how they should read Scripture, and how in that way they understand who the Messiah is, and what had to happen to Him. This process goes step by step, and started from the very beginning. The text states: He started with Moses. That means that Jesus began with the first five books of Scripture, hence with Genesis.

But if you have learned how to understand the Bible, then that does not yet mean that you are able to understand Jesus. You may be able to get the story, but how are you then going to build up a relationship with the Lord? Jesus taught his disciples in a way of his own how to understand the Scripture in such a manner that they learned to see Jesus with new eyes. In addition, there is still a repetition. I am saying 'in addition' because in fact there are three repetitions. The first repetition

entails the story the disciples were allowed to tell. Once again they relate to the stranger what had happened to them. The second repetition is the reading of Scripture. Something that those born as Jews already learned to do from the age of five onward, even in those times. Then Jesus adds a third repetition, namely the breaking of the bread. And it is precisely through the breaking of the bread that their eyes open up, literally and figuratively. This sign which is so typical of Jesus, does teach the disciples how to understand the full story. So, that goes beyond the burning of fire in their hearts, beyond their enthusiasm. It means to understand the totality. One learns to see in everything the perspective of the death on the cross, and the resurrection. By breaking the bread, one starts to understand best who and what Jesus is.

And the rest of the story is then not easily understood. The disciples return immediately. The road to understand may be travelled once again. The group had been scattered so much, because everyone went his own way. Now all are together again. Now they can celebrate Easter together. They have seen the Lord, one shouts. We did recognize Him through and by the breaking of the bread, another one shouts. What a joy that must have been. A feast of recognition!

- **Contemplatio**

*After each number, there will be a moment of silence; at the end there will be a silence period of 10 minutes, ending with instrumental music.*

1. The Easter message “He is alive” creates a lot of confusion, also among the first disciples. The Easter Gospel is the centre of our Christian faith. How central and how clear does it live in you?
2. Sometimes the other person may not understand what you feel is important. Do you recognize that? How do you handle such circumstances?
3. The disciples were disappointed, confused. Their faith had endured a major blow. Do you recognize such a thing in your own life? Are you able to recall when you doubted, when you were disappointed, confused? How did you handle that?
4. The disciples discover who the stranger is by the breaking of the bread. In the Eucharist, the breaking of the bread is in fact celebrating the actual presence of Christ in our midst. How do you experience that presence?

Now we get on our way ...

- **Collatio (sharing)**

Do share with each other *while you are on your way*:

1. What did you in the course of the past days experience in the meditations and sharing?
2. What do you now want to hold on to as important?
3. What are you most looking forward to, when you think of Madrid?

Moment of looking back – moment of now (hold on to this) – and looking ahead (Madrid)

- **When arriving at ‘Peerke Donders’: the Stations of the Cross**