My brothers and sisters in Christ:

Our Gospel presents us today with Jesus’ appearance to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is a beautiful scene that we know well. And all of the drama takes place on that very day, the first day of the week — the day of Jesus’ Resurrection.

And there are many things that we can learn from this passage of the Gospel. Let me just bring to your attention a couple of them that I think would be useful for us during this Easter season and as we continue our journey of faith.

The first one is the fact that the disciples of Emmaus were able to meet Jesus. But as I’m sure that you noticed, at the beginning, the disciples do not know that they are walking and talking with Jesus. They think he is a visitor — a stranger in Jerusalem. The Gospel tells us: Their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

I think this is a message to us. If we want to know Jesus, as we do, if we want to realize that he is present in our lives, then we need a whole new way of seeing. We need Jesus to open our eyes, the eyes of our heart.

And that’s exactly what happens to these disciples today in our Gospel. Jesus Christ opens their hearts — by talking to them about the Scriptures, and then he opens their eyes to see him — through the breaking of the bread.

What I think is interesting, and this is also a good lesson for all of us today, is that this is the same thing that happens every time we celebrate the Holy Mass. As we know, in every Mass, first we hear the readings from Sacred Scripture and then we have the breaking of the bread in the Eucharist.

That’s what this passage of the Gospel is trying to teach us. It is showing us that in the Eucharist, we have a deep connection — a personal connection — with the risen Christ. In the Mass, Jesus comes to open our minds, to understand the Scriptures.

This is why we heard the readings from Sacred Scripture in every Mass. And in the Mass, Jesus still comes to the table — the holy altar. To bless the bread and break it, and give it to us to eat.

My brothers and sisters, this is the beautiful reality of the Gospel.
So we should look at this Gospel a little more carefully.

As I’m sure you noticed, in our Gospel, Jesus begins by explaining the Scriptures to his disciples. They are walking down the road — the road of life, really. They are talking about their struggles and the things that are going on. And Jesus draws near to them. He comes up close to walk with them.

And he helps them to see everything in light of God’s Word, God’s promises. He explains the meaning of the Scriptures to them.

And then we see that Jesus’ interpretation of the Scriptures causes the disciples’ hearts to burn inside. When they understand the Scriptures, they are excited, they have a longing to be close to Jesus. He inspires them with the desire for conversion. With the desire for communion with Jesus.

So then the disciples make a kind of confession of faith. They urge Jesus to be with them, to remain with them. The disciples say: Stay with us!

And then, as we just heard, Jesus sits down at table, and he takes bread, blesses it and breaks it, and gives it to them.

Now, as we know, this language sounds very familiar. It is the same language that we find in the story of the Last Supper, when Jesus established the Eucharist. In fact, when we read the Last Supper story, we have the same words in the same order. Jesus was seated at table and he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them."mii

So this Gospel story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is showing us the celebration of the Eucharist. It is the first celebration of the Eucharist after the Resurrection.

This is the same thing that we will do in just a few minutes. We have heard the words of the sacred Scriptures. And in few moments, at the altar, we will have the breaking of the bread.

What our Gospel is telling us today is that Jesus is still with us — in the person of his priest. He still comes to us in the celebration of the Eucharist. Just as he did with those disciples.

In the Mass, Jesus comes to open our minds — to understand the Scriptures. That is why we hear the readings from the sacred Scriptures in every Mass.

And in the Mass, Jesus still comes to the table — to the holy altar — to bless the bread and break it and give it to us to eat.

My brothers and sisters, this is the beautiful reality of the Resurrection. We heard the preaching of St. Peter in our first reading today, these powerful words:
God raised this Jesus; of this we are all witnesses.

This is the truth! It is amazing! And what is more amazing is that we can know this Jesus. He walks with us, just like he was walking with those disciples at Emmaus.

We are sojourners, pilgrims in this world, St. Peter tells us in the second reading. We walk not by sight, but by faith and hope in the God who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

But we are not walking through this world alone, my brothers and sisters. Jesus is walking with us.

Jesus wants to walk with us every day of our lives — just as he did with those disciples on that first Easter afternoon. He wants to walk with you and talk with you, though you cannot see him.

And we can know him, as they did, personally, intimately — in the breaking of the bread.

In the Gospel that we just heard, after Jesus breaks the bread, the disciples’ eyes are opened and they recognize him — for the first time. Then Jesus vanishes out of their sight.

Then, the Gospel tells us, those disciples ran out to tell others what they had experienced. And this is a message for us.

Like those first disciples, we are called to go out and proclaim Jesus. We are called to be saints, called to be witnesses to the risen Jesus. We are called to tell everyone that Jesus is risen from the dead. That he is alive and walking with us in our world!

We have to tell others the joy of knowing Jesus in his Word and in his Sacraments.

So we come to the holy altar today, as we come to meet Jesus in the breaking of the bread, let us ask him to grant us the grace to make our lives a way of love and a path of holiness.

And let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary to pray for us. May she help us to know that our lives are a beautiful adventure of following Jesus every day! May she help us to bring others to Jesus, so everyone can know him in the breaking of the bread.

ii Eph. 1:18.

iii Mark 14:17, 22; Matt. 26:20, 26; Luke 22:14, 19.