

Have you ever been in a group listening to someone telling a joke, and then at the punch line everybody laughs except you. You don't get it, and then someone has to explain it to you, and then you get it, and you feel a bit foolish.

A similar thing is happening in the gospel story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is the afternoon of Easter Sunday. These two disciples have witnessed all the events – the passion and death of Jesus, the stories of the empty tomb, and they just do not get it. Their hopes have been dashed, their dreams for a new kind of life of freedom from oppression have been ruined, and they are sad, despondent, and walking away from the others. They are leaving, because they don't get it – they have not understood the meaning of it all. They had placed all their hopes in Jesus, and now he was dead, it was all over.

They are walking on the road, and Jesus comes along and walks with them, he listens to them and talks to them. From what they say, and from what Jesus says to them, we can see that they don't get it – they don't even recognise Jesus, they are so downhearted and confused; “foolish men” Jesus calls them “so slow to believe the message”. But then he takes the time to explain it all to

them, how the scriptures of the Old Testament point to the Messiah, and how it was written the Messiah must suffer, die and so enter into glory (which refers to the Paschal mystery, the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ). This is what they don't get, the truth of the Paschal mystery is hidden from them, and yet as he talks their hearts are burning – in other words the wonderful truth of it all is starting to dawn on them. But they don't recognise him until he sits at the table with them, and breaks the bread. As soon as they recognise him, he disappears; but now they get it, and they return immediately to Jerusalem and tell the others.

What happened on that first Easter Sunday on the way to Emmaus happens every time we come to Mass. Jesus is present in the Mass through his word, through the scriptures that are proclaimed. We hear words from the Old Testament which point us to him, and in the New Testament we hear the fulfilment of this great story of our salvation. He speaks to us, and we listen. We have it explained to us, so that hopefully, we get it. Then we witness the utter mystery and wonder of the Eucharistic presence of the Lord Jesus, who miraculously transforms simple bread and wine into himself, his Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity – we know him in the breaking of bread;

we recognise him, as did those two disciples. We get it. That is why we come here to Mass every week. But there are so many who don't get it. Members of our families, our friends, many of those involved in the life our schools, those who are lapsed whom we don't see at church very often. They don't get it, or they would be here.

What can we do about this? We know that we must try and evangelise, spread the good news. How can we give that gentle encouragement and witness that is needed? We just have to look to Jesus. What does he do? He meets them on the road, in their confusion and distress; he listens to them as he walks with them; then he explains the message so that they do get it; and he brings them to the place where they can recognise him in the breaking of bread. WE have to try and do that with people, meet them where they are along the road of life, accompany them on their faith journey, with the purpose of bringing them to where Jesus wants them to be – that is in the Church, sharing the faith of the Church, recognising him for who he really is, in the scriptures and in the breaking of bread.