
Word of Life

April 2026

Stay with us, for it is nearly evening

(Lk 24:29).

The road that leads to the village of Emmaus reminds us of a journey made by two of Jesus' disciples. They were feeling very disappointed as they walked along because their dreams and plans and the powerful experiences they had lived with the Master had come to nothing. They were returning home to resume the life they had left behind, the one they had lived before meeting the Lord. Only three days had passed since his crucifixion, but disappointment, fear and doubt reigned among his followers.

They were leaving Jerusalem, turning their backs on their unfulfilled dreams and distancing themselves from Christ and his message. They were sad because somehow, they had already made the decision to abandon the project for which they had originally followed him.

This is a story to which we can easily relate. Sometimes we too meet with complex situations and feel completely lost. There may be many possible options but often we believe that turning back is the only solution. Giving up and giving in can seem the only way to lessen our unease and distress.

"Who among us is not familiar with the visit to Emmaus? Who has not walked this road on an evening when all seemed lost? Christ had died in us... There was no longer any Jesus on earth." ¹

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As the disciples walk along, a stranger joins them, seemingly unaware of the events that have just taken place. He begins to ask precise questions which bring out all the disciples' bitterness and discouragement. At first, he listens to them but then begins to explain the Scriptures. It is all a dialogue, an encounter that leaves its mark, so much so that, even though they have not yet recognized Jesus, the disciples beg him to stay with them because it is getting dark. ²

Perhaps this is one of the most beautiful prayers we find in the Gospels. It is the first prayer of request that the disciples make to the Risen One, and it is moving to acknowledge that today we can invite him to do the same, to remain with us and among us.

The eyes of the two disciples will be opened when the "stranger" breaks the bread and the joy of finally recognizing him will prompt them to return to Jerusalem to announce his resurrection to their friends.

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Chiara Lubich wrote "Perhaps nothing better than these words can explain the experience that we within the Focolare have had of living with Jesus in our midst from the beginning. Jesus is always Jesus, and even if he is only spiritually present, he explains the Scriptures and his charity burns in our hearts: this is life. Once we have had this experience and have known him, with infinite yearning we continue to say: 'Stay with us, Lord, for it is getting late'; without you the night is dark"³.

The night is a symbol of darkness, of the unknown and of the lack of the light that we cannot find when we do not believe in his presence – a presence that accompanies us always.

The night envelops our wounded and violated planet that is marked by massacre and by war motivated by the lust for power and money.

Night is what millions of people experience, people who no longer have a voice to cry out against injustice and oppression.

How can we be aware of the presence of Jesus who does not always reveal himself according to our expectations? How can we understand that he walks with us and tries to make us recognize the signs of his presence? Above all, how can we create the conditions for him to be present and remain with us?

These are questions to which we may not always know the answer, but which urge us not to give up the search for Jesus, to focus our gaze on a travelling companion whom we often do not see, to recognize the One who can make himself present, if we live mutual love among ourselves.

The road to Emmaus is a symbol of all our roads; it is the road of encounter with the Lord; it is the road that restores joy to our hearts and brings us back to the community to bear witness together that Christ is risen.

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Each month the Focolare chooses a Scripture passage as a guide and inspiration for daily living. The commentary draws inspiration from the Spirituality of Unity of the Focolare. It is translated into 96 different languages and reaches millions of people worldwide.

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1. Francois Mauriac, "La Vita di Gesù"

2. Cf. Lk. 24:17-29

3. Chiara Lubich, "Scritti Spirituali"