

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter (A)

April 19, 2026

“Journey in Faith”

**Life is a journey**, as illustrated in the story of the minister who grew tired of the man in the front row who fell asleep five minutes into his sermon each week. Finally, one Sunday, when the man fell asleep, he instructed the congregation, “Please remain seated while I make the following announcement.” And then announced loudly, “Would everyone in this church who is going to hell please stand up!” while he pounded the pulpit. The man woke up, turned around, looked at the congregation, turned around and looked at the minister and said, “Reverend, I don’t know where we’re going, but it looks like you and I are the only one’s going there!”

**Life is a journey**, as we hear in Luke’s account of the Emmaus experience. Three words can encapsulate the Lord’s actions during this experience: *walk*, *interpret*, and *gave*.

Two disciples are making their way to Emmaus, seven miles west of Jerusalem (the same distance and direction from Oelwein to Fairbank, by the way). As they make their way, the Lord appears and walks with them. They are not alone, even though they feel that God has abandoned them. In the Book of Exodus, as the Hebrews left Egyptian slavery, the Lord went ahead of them in a column of cloud by day and a column of fire by night (Ex. 13:21). But here he walks with them, not ahead or behind, but beside. God always walks with us, even though we don’t feel it. He walks as one with us because presence is love.

As they walk and reveal their “foolishness” and “slowness of heart,” Jesus interprets “Moses and all the prophets” for them. He reveals God’s plan unfolded, from Moses on Mount Sinai, who gave the first law, to Isaiah who predicted Mary’s giving birth to the Savior, to Zechariah, who forecasted Our Lord’s being pierced with a lance, to the Psalmist, who first said, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”, and much more. Jesus tied the Old and New Testaments together, explaining how God prepared for Christ’s redemptive death and resurrection for centuries. He opened their minds and set their hearts on fire.

Finally, when they arrive, in a Eucharistic-type ritual, he takes bread, says a blessing, breaks it, and gives it to the disciples, thus causing their eyes to be opened. Jesus shares what he has with those whom he loves. The “breaking of bread” is an early Church reference to the Eucharistic celebration. Jesus, who multiplied loaves and changed water into wine in his earthly life, shares the gift of “bread blessed and broken” in his resurrected life. He shares out of the abundance of his love for us.

**Life is a journey** with Jesus, *walking, interpreting, and giving* to us. These actions continue in the Church. The Church walks with us up the mountains of success—when couples celebrate golden anniversaries and baptisms, and through valleys of—when grieving relatives mourn the loss of a child from cancer. The Church is always walking with us, whether we know and appreciate it or not.

Faith tells us that the Church is the extension of Christ, and the work of the Church is an extension of the work of Christ. What he did at Emmaus on that Sunday continues in the lives of the Holy Father, the bishops, priests, deacons, and laity who constitute the Church today. Do you believe? Do I?

On this Third Sunday of Easter, may we grow in faith in the presence of God in our Sunday assembly, the holy Word, the gift of Eucharist, and the person of the priest-celebrant, and respond to that awareness by acts of charity and mercy.

### **Journey in Faith Prayer**

Lord Jesus,  
you accompanied your disciples on the way to Emmaus.  
As we journey in faith,  
we trust in your Spirit  
to open our eyes,  
to set our hearts on fire, and to transform our parishes.  
Make yourself known to us through breaking open word and bread,  
that we may travel together on mission,  
to grow disciples, cultivate leaders,  
and unify parishes, with our journey ending in you,  
Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

God bless you.