

April 15, 2024

Luke chapter 24: The Road to Emmaus, Appearance of the Risen Lord, and the Ascension

Only in Luke's Gospel do we have the two disciples walking to Emmaus from Jerusalem who encounter the risen Jesus after the Crucifixion. Jesus breaks open the Scriptures for them. We see the (Liturgy of the Word), and then they recognize Jesus at the breaking of the Bread (Eucharistic Liturgy). In essence this is the form of the Mass. Saturday we celebrated First Communion with over 100 youth. So 2000 years later we are still following the Worship (Mass) as described in a letter by Justin Martyr written directly to the Roman Emperor Antoninus. In the letter Justin describes Christian worship in the early Church (penned around 150AD).

The Mass and the Eucharist were huge reasons why your priest converted from Evangelical Christianity to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Right worship is a wonderful gift that Jesus gave to His Church from the beginning. When we get worship right by giving God His "just due" (Justice); right order and balance (Justice) flows to the other areas of our lives.

Below is an excerpt from the first apology in defense of the Christians by Saint Justin, martyr (Cap. 66-67: PB 6, 427-431)

The celebration of the Eucharist:

No one may share the Eucharist with us unless he believes that what we teach is true unless he is washed in the regenerating waters of Baptism for the remission of his sins, and unless he lives in accordance with the principles given us by Christ.

We do not consume the eucharistic bread and wine as if it were ordinary food and drink, for we have been taught that as Jesus Christ our Savior became a man of flesh and blood by the power of the Word of God, so also the food that our flesh and blood assimilates for its nourishment becomes the Flesh and Blood of the incarnate Jesus by the power of his own words contained in the prayer of thanksgiving. The apostles, in their recollections, which are called gospels, handed down to us what Jesus commanded them to do. They tell us that he took bread, gave thanks, and said: *Do this in memory of me. This is my body.* In the same way he took the cup, he gave thanks and said: *This is my blood.* The Lord gave this command to them alone.

On Sunday we have a common assembly of all our members, whether they live in the city or the outlying districts. The recollections of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as there is time. When the reader has finished, the president of the assembly speaks to us; he urges everyone to imitate the examples of virtue we have heard in the readings. Then we all stand up together and pray. On the conclusion of our prayer, bread and wine and water are brought forward. The president offers prayers and gives thanks to the best of his ability, and the people give assent by saying, "Amen." The Eucharist is distributed, and the deacons take it to those who are absent.

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day of the week, the day on which God put darkness and chaos to flight and created the world, and because on that same day our savior Jesus Christ rose from the dead. For he was crucified on Friday and on Sunday he appeared to his apostles and disciples and taught them the things that we have passed on for your consideration.

“If angels could be jealous of men, they would be so for one reason: Holy Communion.” -Saint Maximillian Kolbe

Vivat Jesus,
Father Vic Gournas