

By Rev. Helen Harper:

Rev. Harper is the Priest at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Niagara Falls.

The Road to Emmaus

The location of the story in Luke's Gospel called Emmaus has never been identified with certainty. However, Luke tells us it was approximately 7 miles from the city of first-century Jerusalem. This story begins with two men, who are not part of the eleven disciples who are left after the Resurrection. We know this because it says they are going to report what has happened to the eleven. The two men meet Jesus while on their walk, but have no idea about his identity. They think he is a stranger. They only become aware of his identity when "...he (Jesus) interpreted things to them about Moses, the prophets, and himself, as written in scripture." It is in the second part

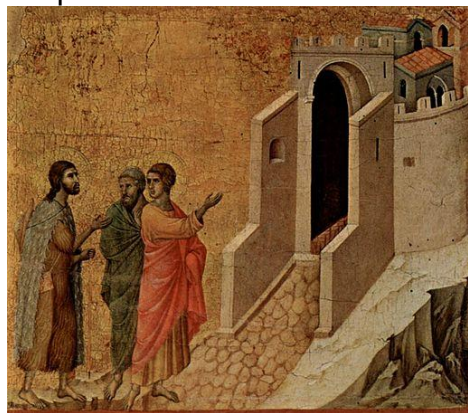
of the story that the significance of this stranger becomes known to the travelers, and this word "*known*" is significant in this Gospel.

The men invite this stranger to have a meal with them which, shows us the importance of extending hospitality beyond those whom we know. It is only during their meal, and particularly while they are breaking the bread, that Jesus' identity is revealed to them. He becomes "*Known*" to them, and they finally understand it is Jesus himself who is dining with them! Then, while talking among themselves, they remember a feeling they had as though their hearts were burning within them while traveling on the road. Perhaps on some level they were already experiencing feelings of great joy to be in the company of the Risen Christ.

This Gospel can best be described as a study in movement because throughout it we read: Two men are **going** on the road. Jesus **came near and went** with them. The (men) **came near** Emmaus, Jesus **walked** ahead of them, he **went in**

Luke 24:13-35

"They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"



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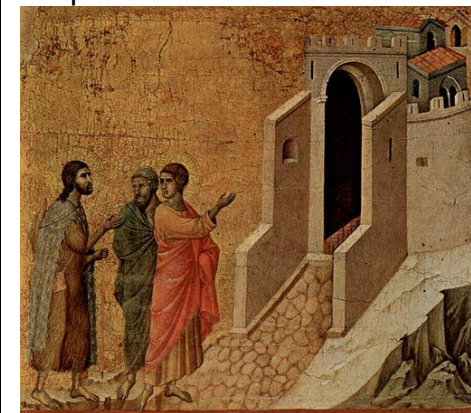
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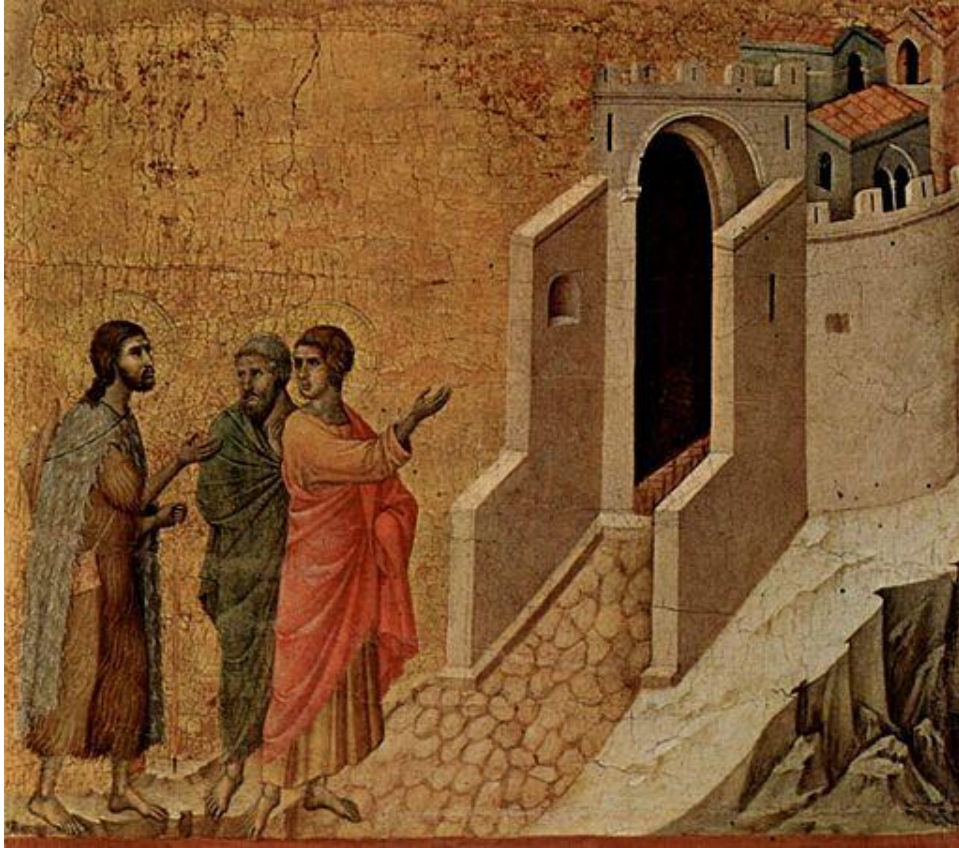
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to stay with them, he **vanished** from their sight, (the men) **got up and returned** to Jerusalem.

The Acts of the Apostles tells us the disciples were constantly on the move, but it wasn't movement for its own sake, all their moves had purpose. Throughout the Gospels the disciples are on the move telling and retelling the story of Jesus' dying and rising to new life. Wherever they went they shared the miracle of the Resurrection, and what it meant to them to be a believer. This is the same story it has become our privilege to continue to share with joy while living a life steeped in faith, hope, and love.

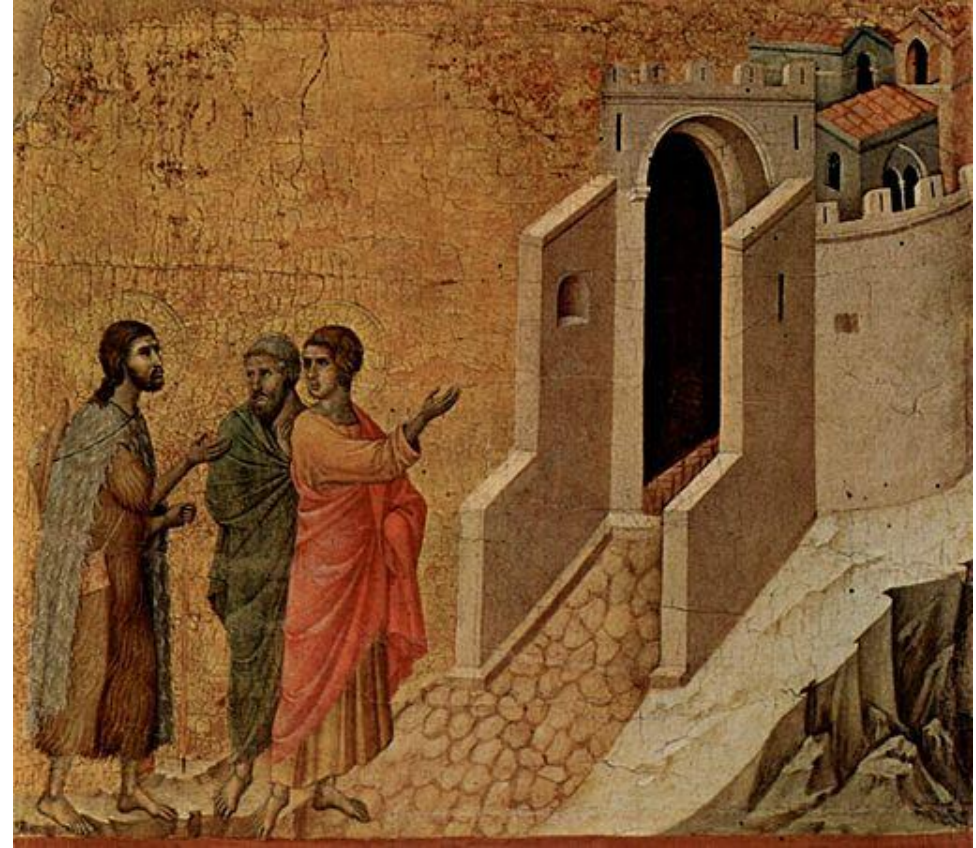


Christ appears to two pilgrim apostles in Emmaus
By: Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1308-1311

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