

The Walk to Emmaus

Chapter Sixteen



The story of the two friends making the walking journey from Jerusalem to nearby Emmaus is straight forward. St. Luke recounts the story:

"But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home wondering at what had happened. That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?' And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.' And he said to them, 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it

not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but, they constrained him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?' And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread." (Luke 24:12-35 RSV)

The modern Christian *Walk to Emmaus* program originated in Spain in the late 1940's. *Cursillo de Christianidad* moved to America in the 1950's. Until the 1970's it was primarily a Roman Catholic movement. As the Catholic centers started accepting applications from Protestants, efforts began among some groups to make the Cursillo experience available to all Protestants. In the late 1970's, The Upper Room (a unit of the Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church) formed the Upper Room Cursillo in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1981, by mutual agreement between the National Secretariat of the Roman Catholic Cursillo movement and The Upper Room, the name of the Nashville Protestant community was changed to *Walk to Emmaus*. The Emmaus movement is ecumenical.¹

The *Walk to Emmaus* associate program for youth is known as *CHRYSALIS*, a 72-hour experience. Chrysalis is the growth stage between caterpillars and butterflies. While on the surface it may look like nothing is happening, the delicate process changes a caterpillar into a butterfly with wings and beautiful colors--this symbolizes the transformation that Christ can bring, transforming us into something beautiful.

And the theme song of the Emmaus programs are fittingly entitled 'De Colores,'--'the Colors.'

Finally, the *Walk to Emmaus* is for the development of Christian leaders who:

- Wish to strengthen their spiritual lives;
- May have unanswered questions about prayer, study and sharing their faith;
- Understanding that being a Christian involves responsibility;
- Are willing to dedicate their everyday lives to God in an ongoing manner;
- Have positions of responsibility in the church and the world.

And as the objective of the *Walk to Emmaus* program is to inspire, challenge and equip local church members for Christian action in their homes, churches and places of work it is fitting that the focus of the program is God as known in Jesus Christ and how that finds expression in the local church. The Emmaus program lifts up a way for a grace-filled life to be lived and shared with others.

The Walk to Emmaus # 213

**"Return to the Lord . . . for He is gracious and
abounding in love . . ." (Joel 2:13 NIV)**

The *Walk to Emmaus* attended by the author occurred on February 16-19, 2012 and was hosted by the First United Methodist Church in Gilbert, Arizona.

The *Walk To Emmaus* weekend begins about 7:00 p.m. Thursday evening and concludes about 7:00 p.m. Sunday evening. The typical day begins at 7:00 a.m. with a chapel meditation. After breakfast follows a series of "talks" given both by lay and clergy leaders. After each talk a period of discussion and sharing by small groups is provided. This is where much of the lasting effect of Emmaus develops. The same schedule holds after lunch and dinner. The day usually ends about 10:00 p.m. There is ample time provided in each day for "breathers" and casual sharing.

The whole weekend is rooted in joy and prayer, and in a holy orientation that is both natural and deepening.

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shown as a sample of
this chapter.**

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