

In our reading Jesus invites us to keep his remembrance alive through the sacrament of Communion. This remembrance creates community and strengthens us for the journey of discipleship.

On one occasion the resurrected Jesus created a powerful memory for two disciples he met up with on the road to Emmaus. It was not until later, when he sat at the table and shared bread with them, that they recognized who he really was. They asked, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Have you ever experienced the presence of God, perhaps even during a time of Communion, in a way that revealed life-changing, new understandings of faith for you? What practice helps you keep those memories alive?

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Memory is one of the cornerstones of what it means to be human. Retaining memories of our experiences is vital to our development. It makes us who we are and helps us make sense of the world we live in.

Peter wrote the Scripture we read today toward the end of his life. For these early Christians, he makes a commitment to continue to "refresh" their memory of faith practices and truths that have led to their spiritual growth.

Why do you think Peter felt it was important to make this commitment? Who in your life could help you "refresh" or keep alive your memories of faith experiences and truths you've learned along the way? Who could you make this kind of commitment to?

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The writer of Psalm 143 shows us a bit of his own troubled spirit just before he begins to remember the eternal and powerful nature of God. God, the Creator, is bigger than his struggle.

We recognize that the Psalmist would not actually be able to "remember the days of long ago" when God created the earth. That happened long before he was born. But he would be able to remember the stories of creation he learned through Scripture. When he meditates on God's power and mercy, he then recognizes his real need. He needs God. So he opens his hands as a sign that he is ready to receive God's refreshing grace.

Take time to consider the great things God's hands have created. They are big and powerful enough to create the universe, and at the same time, sensitive and gentle enough to shape and refresh the spirit that lives inside you.

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A woman would have been viewed as a second-class citizen, even in Bethany, which means "house of suffering." Many of those suffering from leprosy and other illnesses were sent away to live in Bethany. This unlikely hero must have been a courageous risk-taker to step into Simon's house and bless Jesus in this way.

The probability of a woman in Bethany ever receiving the kind of recognition Jesus graciously gives her is highly unlikely. But Jesus announces that it is this woman's beautiful and fragrant gift of ministry to him that will be remembered wherever the gospel is preached.

Why do you think Jesus felt so strongly about this woman's act of service? Where do you think this woman's courage came from? Is there something you feel led to do today that will require this same kind of courageous love?

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