

Easter 3 2008

For the glory of the Risen Lord; Amen.

It's Easter evening, and two of Jesus' disciples are on the road to Emmaus

They'd seen the worst; their hopes were dashed, it was all over now, and it was the third day since Jesus had been crucified.

The road to Emmaus

A metaphor for the dusty roads we walk in life together

These two disciples thought it was the end of the road for them.

Haven't we all felt at times like we were at the end of the road?

No hope? No future?

The Gospel says, "Jesus came up and walked along with them. But they were not able to recognize who he was."

It's hard recognizing Christ when you're in despair
Like the two men on the road that Easter evening,
Mary at the tomb had a hard time recognizing the Christ.

She thought Jesus to be the gardener...

This failure to recognize the risen Lord at first is an important feature of the Easter Gospel.

This failure to recognize Christ persists to this day.

The definition of recognize:

- . to identify as something or someone previously seen, known, etc.: *He had changed so much that one could scarcely recognize him.*
2. to identify from knowledge of appearance or characteristics: *I recognized him from the description. They recognized him as a fraud.*
3. to perceive as existing or true; realize: *to be the first to recognize a fact.*

1. So in this sense of the definition, one would have to have **previously seen or known Christ.**

We have, haven't we?

When is the last time you saw Jesus?

The disciples on the road to Emmaus saw and recognized the Risen Christ first, in community.

They said, "stay with us," and he did.

Community – where two or more are gathered.

He came with them and broke bread, the symbol of his life broken for us.

I see Jesus at the communion rail, in the eyes of our gathered community.

I love facing East, so when I raise the silver chalice, I see the congregation reflected in the silver.

The picture of you gleaming in the cup speaks to the deep spiritual truth that we are vessels of the living God.

We are the vessels of God's love poured out for us.

2. The second definition is to identify from **knowledge or appearance or characteristics.**

One characteristic consistent in this Easter story is that Jesus was thought a stranger

[Genesis 15:13](#)

Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that your descendants will be **strangers** in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.

[1 Chronicles 29:15](#)

We are aliens and **strangers** in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.

[Psalms 39:12](#)

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a **stranger**, as all my fathers were.

[Matthew 25:35](#)

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a **stranger** and you invited me in.

44"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a **stranger** or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?"

3. The ringer. "To perceive as existing or true; to realize." This is interior soul identification, and has little to do with outside appearances.

It's that wonderful feeling that goes down your spine when you know you've just been visited by God.

Beam of light story

Emma's resurrection story – desolate road

Stay in community

Corrective to cozy community

Embrace the stranger

To perceive God in our midst.