



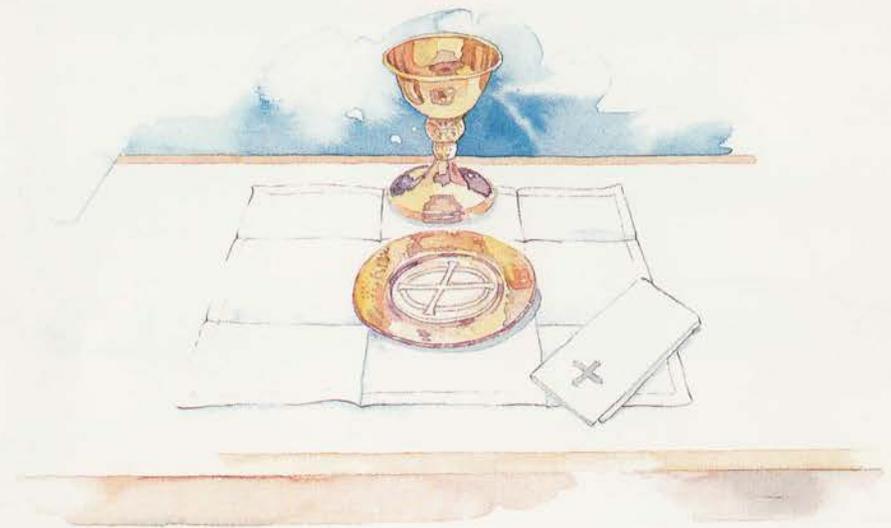
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**Chalice Year—Primary, Unit III**

Text by ECC editors

Illustrations by Bobbi Tull

# CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE EUCHARIST



# CHRISTIANS CELEBRATE EUCCHARIST

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## CHAPTER 1

# Jesus' Last Supper

When Jesus was growing up, his family celebrated the Passover as all Jewish families did. Year after year, people met in homes to share this sacred meal.

At the Passover celebration, people remembered how God brought the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. Moses led them to freedom. They crossed the Red Sea and were safe from Pharaoh's army.

At the sacred meal, everyone drank wine. They ate bread with no yeast. They did this because they wanted to remember how their ancestors left Egypt in a hurry. There had been no time to wait for their bread to rise.

The people also tasted bitter herbs. It reminded them of the bitterness of their suffering as slaves.

The night before Jesus died, he was in Jerusalem with his disciples. It was the week of the Passover, and it had been filled with excitement.

Jesus had entered the city riding on a donkey. People

had waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" Jesus had been teaching each day since then. Now he wanted to have an evening meal with his close friends, the Twelve who had been with him for three years.

Many, many times these disciples had shared food with their Teacher. And they all remembered that day when Jesus had fed five thousand people with only a few loaves and fish. How amazed they had been!

This time, they met for supper in an upper room of a house. It turned out to be a night they would never forget.

After they had finished eating, Jesus surprised the disciples by what he did. He was very serious. All eyes were on him. It was very quiet.

Jesus took some of the bread and thanked God for it. He broke the bread into pieces and shared it with the disciples. He said, "This is my body, given for you."

Then he took a cup of wine and thanked God for it. He passed the cup to his disciples and told them to drink from it. He said, "This is my blood, poured out for you."

Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

What did Jesus mean? Was he about to die? The disciples did not know what to think or say.

## CHAPTER 2

# Christians Remember

It has been almost two thousand years since the night Jesus shared the Last Supper with his disciples.

The next day Jesus, the Son of God, died on a cross.

Then came Easter morning. Jesus was no longer in the tomb. He had risen from the dead. He had won the battle against sin and death. What wonderful good news for all people!

The disciples became “apostles.” (Apostle means “one who is sent out.”) They wanted everyone to hear about Jesus.

They began to tell others all that Jesus had taught them.

Thousands of people asked to be baptized. They were called followers of the Way. Before long, the believers were named “Christians.”

The Holy Spirit was changing people’s lives. The Christians loved one another. They shared food and prayed together.

Everywhere the apostles went, they gathered the new Christians to share bread and wine. They repeated the words they heard from Jesus, “This is my body . . . . This is my blood . . . . Do this in remembrance of me.”

One person who became a Christian was Saul of Tarsus. He had persecuted believers in Christ. Then, one day on a journey to Damascus, Saul saw a blinding light and heard the voice of the Lord. He believed and was baptized. He became a great preacher and teacher. He traveled widely and started new churches. He wrote letters that we have in our New Testament.

Paul wrote to a church he had begun at Corinth, in Greece. He said, “I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, . . .” Then he explained how to celebrate the Christians’ sacred meal, the Lord’s Supper.

Since the time of Paul, the Church has spread into every part of the world.

When Christians meet to worship God, they almost always gather at an altar, a Holy Table. They remember the whole story of Jesus Christ, and they give thanks for all that he has done for us.



At Eucharist, we give thanks to God.



We share the bread and the wine.

## CHAPTER 3

# We Celebrate Holy Eucharist

When Christians gather to eat, we give thanks to God for the food. Sometimes we call our prayers at meals “saying grace.”

In the Greek language, the word for “grace” looks like this: *charis*.

Now look at “Eucharist,” which is the name we use for Holy Communion or the Lord’s Supper. What do you notice?

“Eu-*charis*-t” is a word that means grace! Eucharist is a time for giving thanks to God, just as we give thanks at meals served in our homes.

As we meet at the church around the Holy Table (altar), we celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. That means we share in a meal made holy and sacred by the prayers of the priest and the people.

The Service of Holy Eucharist has two parts:

### *I. The Word of God*

In this first part, we come to God in prayer, we sing

our praise, and we hear lessons and a Gospel reading from the Bible. A sermon is preached, and we share in the Creed and the Prayers of the People. Then we pass the Peace to one another.

### *II. The Holy Communion*

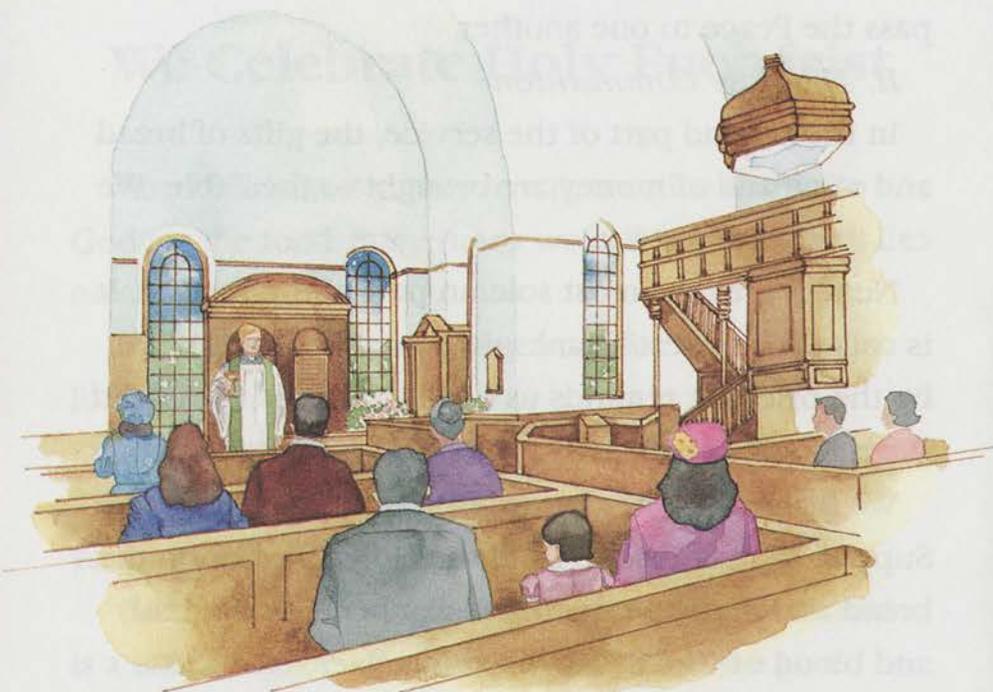
In the second part of the service, the gifts of bread and wine and of money are brought to the Table. We call this the offertory.

Next comes the most solemn part of the service. It is called The Great Thanksgiving—a long prayer led by the priest. It reminds us of all that Jesus Christ did. We remember his death and his glorious resurrection.

We hear again the words Jesus spoke at the Last Supper. We ask God to send the Holy Spirit upon the bread and the wine that they may become the body and blood of Christ. We offer ourselves, our hearts and minds, to the Lord.

Then the bread is broken. Everyone shares in the sacred meal, eating the bread and drinking the wine. We have a final prayer of thanksgiving and receive a blessing from the priest.

As we leave the service, we know we have been very close to Jesus Christ. In our hearts, we are thankful for God’s good grace.



We read the prayers at Eucharist.

## CHAPTER 4

# Eucharist in the Prayer Book

All we really know about Jesus is in the New Testament. It was not written until a long time after Jesus lived.

Christians remembered best of all how he died and rose again. They kept that memory alive as they met to pray—and to eat bread and drink wine at the Eucharist.

After many, many years, the leaders of the Church wrote down the directions for the Service. They wrote the words said by the priest. They wrote the parts for the people to say. In different churches and many countries, the services were written. Not all the services were alike. Some were in Greek. Some were in Latin. And as the Church spread, other languages were also used at the Eucharist.

The books of prayers were for the bishops, priests, and deacons. It took a long time to write them by hand, so it was not possible to give them to all the people.

Then came a wonderful new invention. It was the printing press. In time, it was possible to print prayer books for more and more people.

Since 1549, the Church of England has had *The Book of Common Prayer*. It was written by Bishop Thomas Cranmer. He wanted the people of his country to have their own Prayer Book so that they could share in Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Holy Communion. Many of Bishop Cranmer's prayers are in our own Prayer Book.

We have six different ways to pray The Great Thanksgiving at Holy Communion. Two of these are in Rite I (beginning on pages 333 and 340). The language is very old and beautiful—like the language we use most of the time for the Lord's Prayer. Listen for "thee" and "thou" and "thy." These are ways of saying "you" and "your."

Four ways to pray The Great Thanksgiving are in Rite II (beginning on pages 361, 367, 369, and 372). The language is more like the way we speak today.

The Prayer Book is a wonderful treasure. It helps us all to "lift up our hearts" as we gather at the Holy Table of the Lord.

## CHAPTER 5

# All Churches Are Different

Every Sunday, in churches all over the world, people gather in Anglican churches to receive Holy Communion. In America, Anglican worshipers are called Episcopalians.

Every Episcopal church is different. Some are very, very old. Others are quite new. Some have many members. Others have only a few people.

Some churches have large choirs and pipe organs. Others have quite simple music.

Certain things in the service of Holy Eucharist are the *same* in every church:

- Always there is a Holy Table or altar.
- Always there is a priest who leads the service for the people who gather.
- Bread and wine are placed on the altar.
- Words are read from the Bible.
- Words from *The Book of Common Prayer* are spoken by the priest and the people.

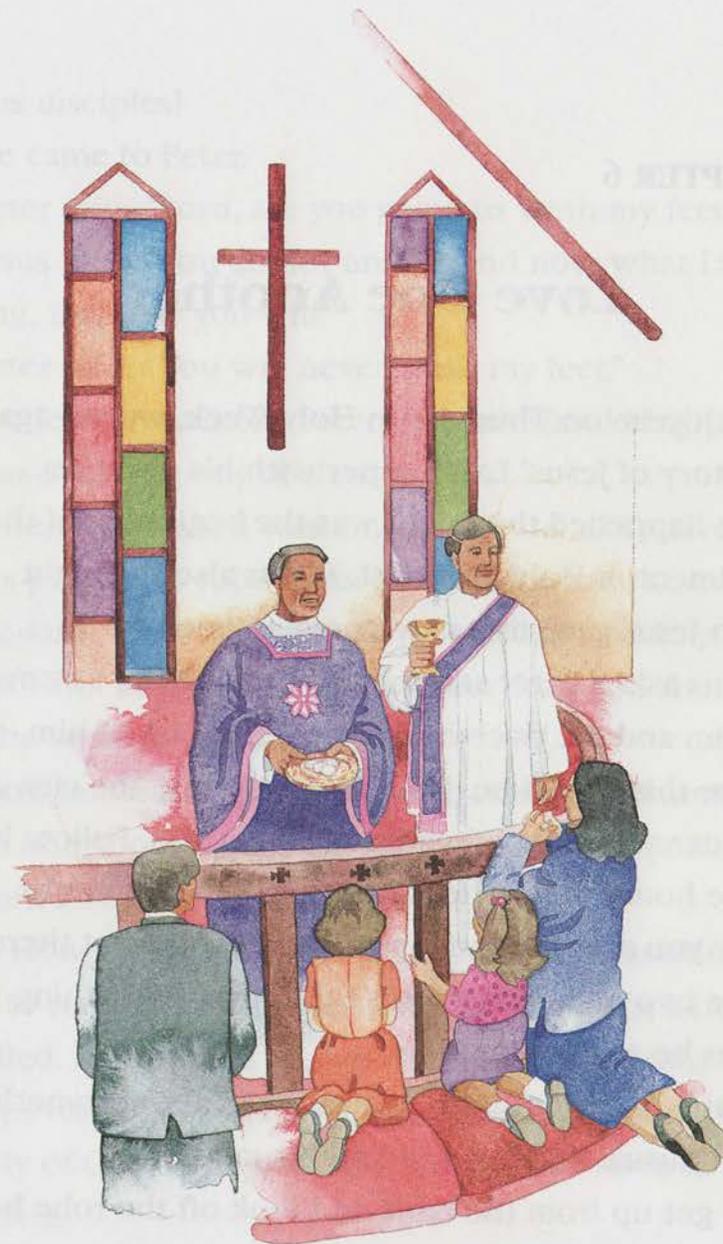
When you visit another Episcopal church, you will see that some things are *different* there. What do you notice? What do you wonder about?

- The altar may be in a different place and made in a different way.
- The people may sit, stand, and kneel at different times.
- The priest may wear different kinds of vestments.
- The bread and the wine may be different.
- The vessels used on the altar may be different.

Some may be silver or gold. Others may be pottery or glass.

- The candles may be different. Some churches have more candles than others.
- The furniture and hangings may be different.
- There may be more helpers, and they may stand in different places.

But wherever we go to church, we will hear Jesus' words, "This is my body . . . . This is my blood . . . ." At Holy Eucharist, we are one with all other Christians. That is the way Jesus wants it to be.



All churches are different.

## CHAPTER 6

# Love One Another

Each year, on Thursday in Holy Week, we tell again the story of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. What happened that night was the beginning of the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist. It was also the night when Jesus gave us a new commandment!

Jesus asked Peter and John to prepare the Passover for him and the twelve disciples. They asked him where this would be. Jesus said, "Go into the city. A man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house where he is going. Ask the owner to show you a large room upstairs. We will meet there."

The two men did as Jesus told them. Everything was just as he said it would be.

In the Gospel of John, we can read about something very unusual that Jesus did at this meal.

He got up from the table and took off the robe he was wearing. Then he tied a towel around himself. He poured water into a bowl and began to wash the feet

of his disciples!

He came to Peter.

Peter said, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

Jesus said, "You do not understand now what I am doing. But later you will."

Peter said, "You will never wash my feet."

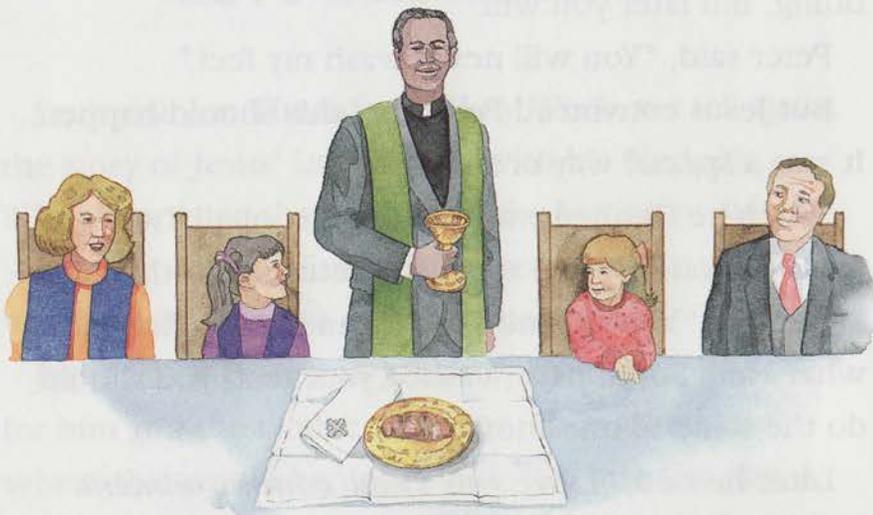
But Jesus convinced Peter that this should happen. It was a special way of sharing.

When he finished washing the feet of all Twelve, Jesus put on his robe again and returned to the table.

He said, "You call me Teacher and Lord. That is what I am. So if I have washed your feet, you should do the same to one another."

Later he said, "I give you a *new commandment*. Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

In Holy Week, many Christians wash one another's feet to remember what Jesus did on the night before he died. But most of all, we remember why Jesus did it. At every Holy Eucharist, we come together as a family of God's people. We come to show love to one another.



Christians love one another.

## CHAPTER 7

# Jesus Suffered and Died

In the Great Thanksgiving at Holy Eucharist, we can pray these words: “On the night before he died for us. . . .” (*The Book of Common Prayer*, page 368).

At the Lord’s Table, we are remembering what happened after Jesus shared the Last Supper. He wanted to pray alone. He knew that the end of his life was near.

One of Jesus’ favorite places was the Mount of Olives. It was a long, sloping hill to the east from Jerusalem. You could climb up and look out on a wonderful view of the city.

So Jesus decided to go there on this sad night.

His disciples followed him.

Jesus went on ahead and knelt to talk with God. He wished he would not have to die! Must it happen? He said, “Father, not my will but yours be done.”

He prayed for a long time. When he got up, he found the disciples asleep. They were full of sorrow.

Jesus asked them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up

and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.”

While Jesus was still speaking with these dear friends, suddenly a crowd came. The crowd was led by Judas, one of the Twelve. He came up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said, “Judas, are you betraying me with a kiss?”

Jesus was led away to the high priest’s house. At a meeting of religious leaders, he was accused of doing wrong. They said he was not the Son of God. Then they handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Pilate learned that Jesus was from Galilee, so he sent him to Herod, the local ruler. Herod treated Jesus badly and sent him back to Pilate.

Pilate told an angry crowd that he found nothing wrong with Jesus. But the crowd shouted louder and louder. They demanded that Jesus die. So in the end Pilate agreed. Jesus was to be crucified.

Jesus was on the cross for several hours. He was in great pain. But he was not bitter toward his enemies. He said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

When he died, Jesus’ body was placed in a tomb that belonged to a good man named Joseph of Arimathea.



Jesus prayed alone and with others.

## CHAPTER 8

# Jesus Has Risen

At Holy Eucharist, we may say together: "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." (*The Book of Common Prayer*, page 363.) We remember the first Easter.

The day after Good Friday was a very sad sabbath for everyone. They prayed and prayed as they rested.

The disciples and all the people close to Jesus were filled with sorrow. It seemed as if all their hopes and dreams were gone. They had thought Jesus would be the Messiah, the one who would bring about God's rule in the world. They had thought he would be the Savior.

In the Gospel of Luke, we can read about what happened the next morning.

At dawn, women who had been with Jesus went to the tomb. They carried spices to anoint the body.

One of the women was Mary Magdalene. She would never forget Jesus. He had helped her to live a better life. With her were Joanna and Mary, the mother of

James, and several others.

When they got to the tomb, the big slab of stone over the entrance had been rolled away. The women went inside. There was no body there! How strange and puzzling this was.

Suddenly there were two men standing near. Their clothes were shining bright like light. The women were terrified. They bowed themselves down to the ground.

The men said, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen."

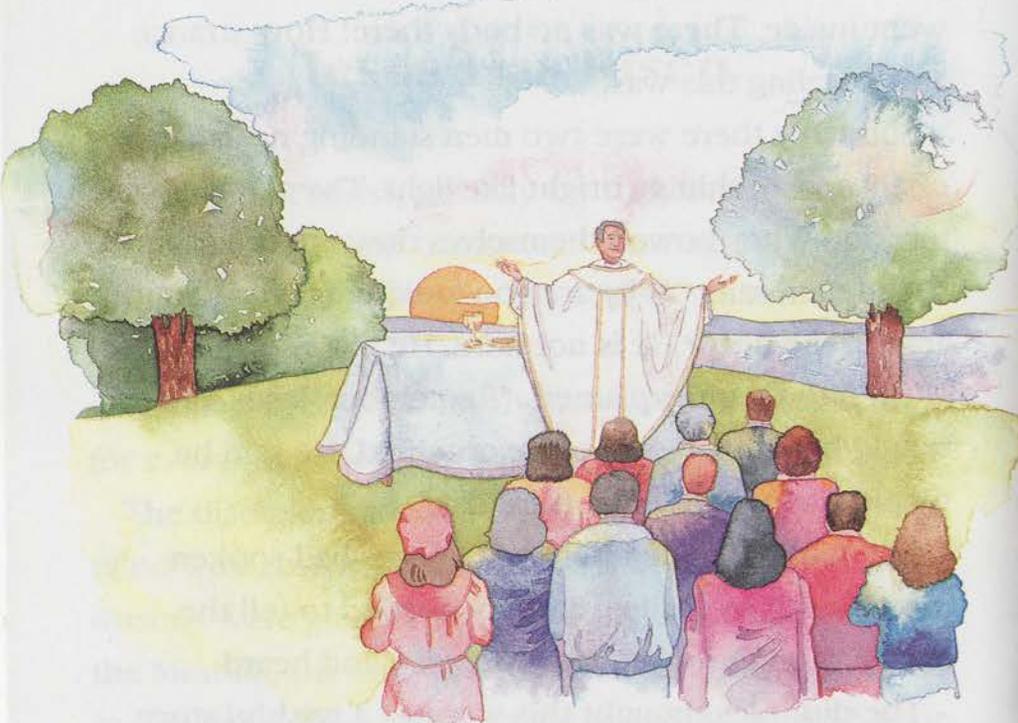
Then the men explained. "Remember. Jesus said he would be handed over to be crucified. He said he would rise again on the third day."

The women remembered that Jesus had spoken these words in Galilee. So they hurried to tell the eleven disciples what they had seen and heard.

The disciples thought this was just a wishful story. They did not believe what the women said.

Peter thought about it and decided to go see for himself. His feet ran faster and faster. He stooped and looked into the tomb. There were the linen cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus' body.

Peter went home. He was amazed. But soon he would understand. Christ had risen indeed!



Alleluia. Christ is risen!



The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

## CHAPTER 9

# Breaking Bread at Emmaus

At Holy Eucharist all through the fifty days of Easter, the priest begins, "Alleluia. Christ is risen." The people answer, "The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia."

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to many people. One of the best stories about these days is at the end of the Gospel of Luke.

On the very same day the women and Peter had visited the empty tomb, two more of Jesus' followers were traveling to the village of Emmaus. One was named Cleopas.

As they walked along, they talked about everything that had happened since Palm Sunday.

Jesus came near and walked with the men. But they did not recognize him.

Jesus said, "What have you been talking about?"

Cleopas said, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know about the things that have happened there this last week?"

Jesus said, "What things?"

The men answered, "The things about Jesus. He was from Nazareth, a prophet who did great deeds and said great words before God and all the people. Our priests and leaders asked that he be killed. He was crucified. We had hoped he would be the Savior our God promised to send.

"Now it has been three days. Some women went to the tomb this morning and the body was gone. Angels told them that Jesus is alive. Some of Jesus' disciples went to the tomb and saw that it was empty. But they did not see Jesus."

Jesus then began to explain to Cleopas and his friend. He told them that it was necessary for the Messiah of God to suffer and then enter into glory.

The men were near the village. They begged Jesus to stay with them. Still, they had no idea who he was!

As they all sat down to eat, Jesus took bread. He blessed it and broke it. He gave it to the men. It was like the Last Supper.

The men's eyes were opened. They knew he was the risen Lord. They said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he was talking on the road?"

They rushed to Jerusalem to tell the eleven disciples.