



Easter Monday
The Collect

O GOD, whose blessed Son did manifest himself to his disciples in the breaking of bread; Open, we pray thee, the eyes of our faith, that we may behold thee in all thy works; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Easter Sunday
The Collect

ALMIGHTY God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; We humbly beseech thee that, as by thy special grace preventing us thou dost put into our minds good desires, so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost ever, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

The Gospel
St. Luke xxiv. 13.

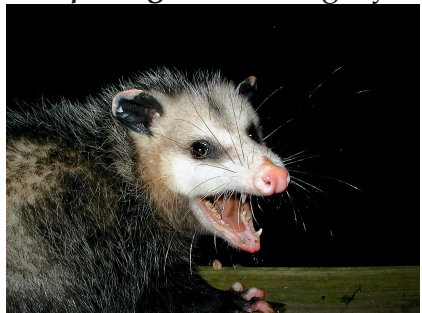
BEHOLD, two of his disciples went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have

redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

CHRISTIANS OF THE DIDELPHIA GENERA

When a child is cast out from his mother and father upon the world, he is made totally defenseless and of no use except to be taken advantage of by society. The world will not feed him or care for him as did his mother. Such a child is considered worthless at best, and a burden at worst to be destroyed. In fact, in some South American cities, street children sleep in the sewers to avoid being found and shot dead in their sleep by the police. So, apart from the values imparted by our parents (and, ultimately, our Father in Heaven), the human boy or girl has no value at all as a rational being. The one thing that gives us value in this life is singular – it is the unmerited GRACE of God! Without God's grace, freely given, we count for nothing in this life or the life to come. It is His grace that makes all of the difference!

You may be somewhat confused or dismayed by the title of this devotion - are you? If you lived in Alabama, you would be too familiar with the creature described as *didelphia genera* though you may not know it by this term. *Didelphia genera* is the scientific name for the American Possum. You, dear



reader, may meet the description for this type of Christian. First of all, the possum will eat ANYTHING. Many Christians as well will eat anything – good or bad. We pretend to love the Word of God, but spend more time on fishing, hunting, fortune tellers, sports, and pornography than we do the Holy Scriptures. The diet of a Christian should consist of a full fare of the Bread of Life (Word of God) every day.

Christians, like possums, often play dead when they are confronted by danger, or embarrassment of their faith, until the danger passes. This classifies the greater number of professing Christians in America today. They are fearful of expressing their honest views on abortion, homosexuality, or religious error. So they keep silent. They play dead like the possum!

Before church on Easter Sunday, my wife and I went for our morning constitutional. About a two blocks away, we saw a possum lying by the road that we had seen the evening before. It had been run over by a car. Looking closely, we saw two



dead baby possums lying by the mother, but there were also six babies still trying to drink from their mother's dead paps. Now, I do not like possums at all, but this pitiful scene was heart-breaking. I considered going for my air rifle to put the babies out of their misery, but didn't want to commit murder, even on baby possums, on Easter Sunday. Later, after church, I was delighted to learn that a neighbor whom we advised of the circumstance, had picked up the possums, placed them in a box

with a heat pad, and had committed to feeding them for the next five weeks until such time as they could be released into the wild. **THAT IS GRACE!** The poor babies were of no worth to anyone. They could only present much trouble in their upkeep; yet, a good soul, made in the image of God, granted them LIFE! We, too, separated from God by our sins, are of no worth whatsoever, but when the grace of God is extended by the blood of Christ, we become choice gems of the Lord of Heaven. Without that grace, we would justifiably be left by the side of the road to die.

How many times have we played spiritually dead? How often do we pray claiming to believe the Lord will hear us, but doubt in our hearts? What about the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus some 2,000 years ago? They had heard with their own ears the Lord's announcement that He must go up to Jerusalem and be crucified; and that He would arise after three days – yet the first event has finally occurred, and they doubted the second. In despondency, they travel those weary miles to Emmaus lamenting sadly the most joyful event (for sinners) that has ever happened. They believe that their Lord has died and is, even now, in a Garden Tomb. Had they truly believed, all of their sorrow would have gone the way of the morning vapors. Even as they doubted and lamented the death of Jesus, He was walking right by their side. How sad that He knows and hears our doubting words. And if the words are not spoken, but hidden in the heart, He still KNOWS.

So how much of Holy Scripture is about Christ? Would you believe that ALL of it relates to Christ. Christ is not A word, but THE Word (Alpha to Omega, A to Z, and all in between.) May we never hear the shameful rebuke Christ gave the two men on the Road to Emmaus: *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself* You will note that Christ tells them that His life and purpose is spoken of in ALL the prophets.

These men had some small degree of spiritual discernment, though they still must have doubted somewhat. It is an eastern custom to be constrained to eat as a guest, or to enter a house as a guest. This is still true especially in greater Asia today. You must be invited into a home three times, and invited to eat three times before you enter and eat. The lesson here is, as the Spanish aver, Christ is a gentleman (Jesu es el Se-ñor) and will not impose on the graces of others without being CONSTRAINED. So He accepts their pleading to enter their home and sit at bread. *But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.* If Christ does not abide in our own hearts, the time is always toward the evening, and the light of day

is passing away. If we lay down our heads in sleep without Him, we may never open our eyes in Heaven.

Next, we read of a strong and stark illustration of the means of grace given at the proper observance of Holy Communion: *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him* Just as He had done on the night of His betrayal, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples. What happens when we partake of the Communion worthily? Our eyes are opened to the reality of the shed blood and broken body of Christ. Immediately, their eyes were opened and they KNEW Him! Proper preparation of the heart before Communion is vitally important. As these two men walked on the road with Christ, what were their feelings? *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* I know many Christians who would rather talk of other things than Scripture. It seems boring to them. On the other hand, I know some few Christians who seem unable to get enough of talking of Christ and learning of Him in Holy Writ. As they read, study, digest, and meditate upon the Word of God, I believe they feel the same emotions expressed by these two men on the Road to Emmaus. When we hear His voice, veiled in the Word of Scripture, our hearts are warmed and He opens the Scripture to us through the agency of the Holy Ghost. And when our eyes are opened, what next? We go and share the beautiful and glorious Gospel that we have been privileged to receive by Grace; and we will pay more than a weekly regard for the Holy Communion. It is not common or to be observed in too rote expression, but savored as the act of love and faith that it truly is.