

Church, to do the Catholic thing in the Catholic way, to own up to Catholic ideals in the many little ways familiar to the faithful will not spoil the fun of any vacation but rather will increase it by reasons of the approving word that will come infallibly from within for an act well done.—Rosary Magazine.

THE STORY OF CHRIST

BY GIOVANNI PAPINI
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EMMAUS

After the solemn ritual of the Passover, plain, ordinary everyday life began again for all men. Two friends of Jesus, among those who were in the house with the Disciples, were to go that morning on an errand to Emmaus, a hamlet about two hours' journey from Jerusalem. They left as soon as Simon and John had returned from the sepulcher. All these amazing tales had shaken them somewhat, but had not really convinced them of an event so portentous and unexpected. Serious-minded men, they could not understand or believe what they had heard: if by the body of the Master was no longer there, might it not have been taken away by men's hands?

Cleopas and his companion were good Jews, men who left a place for the ideal in their minds, burdened with many material cares. But this place for the ideal was not to be too large, and this ideal must be commensurate with their own natures if it were not to be expelled as an unwelcome guest. Like almost all the Disciples, they too expected the coming of a Liberator, but of one who would come to liberate Israel first of all,—a Messiah, in short, who should be the son of David rather than the Son of God, a warrior on horseback rather than a poor pedestrian, a scourge of His enemies and not a lover of sick people and children. The words of Christ had almost given them a glimpse of higher truths, but the crucifixion disheartened them. They loved Jesus, and they suffered in His suffering, but this sudden, shameful ending without glory and without resistance was too great a contrast to what they had expected, and especially to much of what they had hoped. They could understand that He might be a humble Saviour, riding on gentle asses instead of on warlike charges, and a little more spiritual and gentle than they would have liked; they could understand this, although with difficulty, and endure it although grudgingly. But that the Liberator had not known how to free either Himself or others, that the Messiah of the Jews should have died through the will of so many Jews on the scaffold of murderers and parricides, was too great a disappointment,—an inexcusable scandal. They pitied the crucified leader with all their hearts, but at the same time they were tempted to believe that they had been deceived about His real nature,—His death—and what a death!—looked to their narrow, practical minds sadly like a failure.

They were reasoning together of all these things as they went along under the warm noonday sun and at times the discussion grew hot, for they did not always agree. Then suddenly they caught a glimpse of a shadow on the ground near them. They turned around. The shadow was that of a man who was following as if he wished to hear what they were saying. They stopped, as was the custom, to greet him, and the traveler joined them. His did not seem an unknown face to the two men, but look at him as they might, they could not think who it was. The newcomer, instead of answering their silent questions, asked them, "What manner of communications are these that ye have come to another, as ye walk?" Cleopas, who must have been the older, answered with a wondering gesture, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" "What things?" asked the unknown man. "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, today 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."

"O fools, and slow of heart," exclaimed the stranger, "to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" Do you remember how He was predicted from Moses down to our own time? Have you not read Ezekiel and Daniel? Do you not even know our songs of the Lord and His promises? And almost indignantly He recited the old words and the prophecies, recalled the description of the Man of Sorrows given by Isaiah. The two listened, docile and atten-

tive, without answering, because the newcomer spoke with so much heat, and the old admonitions in His mouth took on new warmth and a meaning so clear that it seemed almost impossible that they had not understood them before. The talk of the newcomer gave them the impression of being the echo of other talks like those heard in times past, but confusedly, like a voice from the other side of a wall. In the meantime they had arrived at the entrance of Emmaus, and the pilgrim made as though He would have gone further. But now the two friends were not willing to part with their mysterious companion, and they begged Him to stay with them. The sun was going down, throwing a warmer golden light on the countryside, and their three shadows had lengthened on the dusty road. "Abide with us," they said, "for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. Also thou art tired and it is the hour for food. And they took Him by the hand and made Him come into the house where they were going. When they were at table, the guest who sat between them took bread, and broke it and gave a little to one of His friends. At this action, the eyes of Cleopas and the other man were opened, as when we are suddenly awakened and find the sun shining. Both of them sprang to their feet, trembling with emotion, pale, amazed, and finally knew Him, the murdered man whom they had misunderstood and slandered. But they had no time even to run to kiss Him, for Jesus vanished out of their sight. They had not recognized Him when they had seen Him, not even by His speech, although that was so like His speech in His lifetime; they had not recognized Him even by the light of His eyes while He spoke, nor by the sound of His voice. But when He took the bread in His hands, like a father who shares it with His children in the evening after a day of work or of travel, in that loving action which they had seen Him perform so many times in their hastily arranged intimate suppers, they had recognized His hands, His blessed and wounded hands, and the cloud lifted and they found themselves face to face with the splendor of Christ risen from the dead. In His first life when He was their friend they had not understood Him; when on the road to Emmaus He had taught them, they had not recognized Him, but at the moment when He became the loving Master, serving His servants and giving them bread which is life and the hope of life, then for the first time they saw Him. And tired and fasting as they were, they went back over the road which they had come, and after nightfall arrived at Jerusalem. "And as they went along they said almost shamefacedly, "Did not our heart burn with us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?" The Disciples were still awake. Without drawing breath the newcomers told of their encounter and what had been said along the way, and how they had recognized Him only at the moment when He broke the bread. And in answer to their new confession, three or four voices cried out together, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon!" But not all the Apostles were convinced even by these four appearances, by the fourfold testimony. To some, this prompt, this extraordinary resurrection, which had taken place by night in a secret and suspicious manner, seemed more the hallucination of grief and yearning than actual truth. Who were the people who claimed to have seen Him? A hysterical woman who had been possessed by a devil; a distraught man who had not seemed himself from the moment when he had denied His Master; and two plain fellows who were not even His real Disciples, and whom Jesus had thus chosen, no one knew why, in preference to His closer friends. Mary might have been deceived by a phantom; Simon, to win back his self-respect after his baseness, was determined to do no less than Mary; the others were perhaps impostors or, at the most, visionaries. If Christ were really risen, would not He have been seen by them all while they were together? Why these preferences? Why this appearance at three-score furlongs from Jerusalem? They believed in His resurrection, but they thought of it as one of the signs of the ending of the world, when everything would be fulfilled. But now that they found themselves confronted with the fact that He alone had risen from the dead while everyday life went on as usual, they realized that the return into life of human flesh (and of human flesh which had not gone to sleep peacefully in the last sleep, but whose life had been torn away by violence) that this idea of rising from the dead not in the distant future but in the immediate present, contradicted all the other concepts which made up the tissue of their minds. They realized this contradiction had always existed, but their doubt had not risen to consciousness until this life-giving encounter of two impossible elements: a remote miracle and an actual fact. If Jesus had risen from the dead, that would mean that He was really God; but would a real God, a Son of God, ever have been reconciled to allow Himself to be killed, and in so

shameful a way? If He could conquer death, why had He not stricken down the judges, put Pilate to confusion, paralyzed the arms of those about to nail Him to the cross? Through what paradoxical mystery had the Omnipotent allowed Himself to be dragged through the ignominy of the weak? They were reasoning thus among themselves, some of the Disciples who had heard but had not understood. Prudent like all sophists, they did not venture openly to deny the resurrection in the presence of those exalted hearts, but they reserved judgment, turning over in their minds the reasons for its possibility and impossibility, wishing for a manifest confirmation, but unable to hope for one. In the excitement of the day no one had eaten. But the women had prepared supper, and now all sat down to the table. Simon remembered the Last Thursday: "This do in remembrance of me." And a flood of tears dimmed his eyes while he broke the bread and gave it to his friends. HAVE WE HERE ANY MEAT? They had scarcely eaten the last mouthful when Jesus appeared in the doorway, tall and pale. He looked at them one by one, and in His melodious voice greeted them: "Peace be unto you." No one answered. Their astonishment overcame their joy, even for those who had already seen Him since His death. On their faces the Man risen from the dead read the doubt which He knew they all felt, the question which they did not dare express in words. "Art Thou really Thyself a living man, or a spirit which comes from the caverns of the dead to tempt us?" "Why are ye troubled?" said the Man who had been betrayed, "and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." And He stretched out His hands towards them, showed them the marks still bloody left by the nails, opened His garment over His breast so that they could see the mark of the lance in His side. Some of them, rising from their couches, knelt down and saw on His bare feet the two deep wounds, each with its livid ring around it. But they could not bring themselves to touch Him, for the fear of seeing Him disappear suddenly as He had come suddenly. If one of them had embraced Him, would he have felt the warm solidity of a body, or would his arms have passed through the emptiness of a mere shadow? It was He with His face, with His voice, with the irrefutable traces of the crucifixion, and yet there was something changed in His aspect which they could not have described, even if they had been calm. The most reluctant were forced to believe that the Master stood before them with all the appearance of life begun anew, but their thoughts whirled in the last of their doubts and they were silent as if they were afraid to believe in their senses, as if they expected to wake up, from one moment to another, to find Simon was silent. What could he have said without betraying himself by tears to Him who had looked at him with those same eyes in the courtyard of Caiaphas while he swore that he had never known Him? To make an end of their last doubts, Jesus asked, "Have ye here any meat?" He needed no longer any food except that for which He had vainly asked all His life. But the men of the flesh needed a fleshly proof, a material demonstration as was befitting those who believed only in matter and nourished themselves on their last evening; this evening also, now that they were again together, He would eat with them. "Have ye here any meat?" A piece of broiled fish was left in a dish. Simon put it before the Master, who sat down at the table and ate the fish with a piece of bread while they all stared at Him as though it were the first time they had ever seen Him eat. And when He had finished, He raised His eyes towards them, and, "Are you convinced now, or do you still not understand: does it seem possible to you that a spirit can eat as I have eaten here in your presence? So many times I have been forced to reprove your hardness of heart, and your little faith: And behold you are still as you were at first, and you were not willing to believe those who had seen me, and yet I had hid nothing of what was to happen in these days. But you, deaf and forgetful, hear and then forget, read and do not understand. When I was with you, did I not tell you that all things which were written and which I announced must be fulfilled; that it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem? Now you are witnesses of these things, and behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth, and as the Father sent me, I send you. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be

damned. I will remain here a little and I shall meet again in Galilee, but I am with you always even unto the end of the world." Little by little as He spoke, His Disciples' faces lighted up with a forgotten hope, and their eyes shone with exaltation. This was the hour of consolation after the gloom of those dreadful days just passed. His indubitable presence showed that the impossible was assured, that God had not abandoned them and never would abandon them. Their enemies, apparently victorious, were conquered; the visible truth bore out all the prophecies. It was true that they had known already everything He was then saying, but those truths really lived in them only when His Lips repeated them. Their King had come back, the Kingdom was near at hand, and His brothers, instead of being derided and persecuted, would reign with Him through all eternity. These words had fired again the most tepid, had brightened the memory of other words, of other sunnier days, and suddenly they felt an exaltation, an ardor, a greater desire to embrace each other, to love each other, never more to be separated from each other. If the Master was risen from the dead, they themselves could not die; if He could leave the sepulcher, His promises were the promises of a God and He would fulfill them to the uttermost. Their faith was not in vain, and the cross no longer alone; the crucifixion had been the darkening of one day in order that the light might shine out more splendidly for all the days to come. TO BE CONTINUED

EAGERLY RECEIVES MISSIONERS REDEMPTRORISTS ABLE TO USE TAGALOG DIALECT Manila.—Redemptorist missionaries from Ireland who have been doing such splendid work giving missions during the last twelve years in the Visayan provinces of Cebu, Leyte and Oriental Negros, have brightened the situation in Luzon recently by beginning missions in the Tagalog provinces there. Two of the younger Fathers, somewhat masters of the difficult dialect, have now covered three different towns. Six other Fathers, including four of the old veterans from the Visayas, Fathers O'Callahan, Cassin, Byrne, and Grogan are studying the Tagalog dialect, which is very different from the Visayan. The methods used resemble very much those of the mission bands in the United States. From two to four priests go to a parish for a period of from one to four weeks, saying Mass, giving sermons and instructions, hearing confessions, baptizing, marrying, making a house-to-house canvass. In the course of ten years from 1914 to 1925, the Redemptorist bands in the Visayas operating from Opon, Cebu, as central station, conducted a total of 149 missions. At these, 474,979 confessions were heard; Holy Communion given 1,236,106 times; 18,361 marriages were rectified, and 3,334 converts made. DEMAND GREATER THAN SUPPLY These results,—the only results worth while,—are tremendous, but unfortunately the demand far exceeds the supply, and it will take the Irish Redemptorists in the Visayan region twenty years to give all the missions already asked for, without ever returning to a place for a renewal of a mission. When asked if conditions in the Tagalog provinces were as favorable for the missions as in the Visayan provinces in the South, one of the missionaries answered: "I can only speak for the two missions on which I have been engaged. Here are a few notes. First mission lasted a week. People were very sympathetic and in spite of atrocities committed against their native tongue, responded very well. Here is something worth noting. All day long the women took turns at watching before the Tabernacle and all night long the men. The good people were not asked to do that; it came spontaneously from their generous devotion to Our Blessed Lord. There was some little difficulty dissuading the women from the night vigil. Some of the good souls complained that they had to work all day and so could not watch except at night, and therefore they should be allowed to spend the vigil in the church, especially as they very seldom had the chance to be near Our Lord in His Blessed Sacrament. "On the last morning of the mission when the Fathers were returning home and were bringing the Blessed Sacrament with them, the good people, attired in their best clothes, watched and prayed from early morn till the time of departure, and then accompanied the Blessed Sacrament from the altar to the road, where a car was waiting for the Fathers. As we drove off, the people cried because Our Lord was gone from their little church and there was no priest to bring Him to them. EXHIBITION OF LIVELY FAITH "On the second mission, there was another exhibition of the lively faith and devotion of the people. In this place, Mass is said only a few times in the year. Yet when the mission gave them an opportunity for daily Mass, they availed themselves of it to the full. During

this mission, two people, a boy and an old woman received the last Sacraments. The people knew about it. One morning, after the Mass and instruction were finished, I took the Blessed Sacrament and in surplice and stole and veil, accompanied by a man and one or two boys, prepared to leave the church. What was my surprise, when, on reaching the door of the church, I found practically the whole of the congregation dressed in their best and carrying lighted candles, waiting for me. As we walked along, some of the leaders announced the Rosary and the next responded. Arrived at the house, which was specially prepared for the coming of Our Lord, they prayed through all the ceremonies, and then after all was finished, a few gathered round the boy to help him to pray and make his Thanksgiving. The other Father who anointed the old woman later, had the same experience. "And when at length we left that little spot, oh, what tears, what pleadings, that we would remain to say Mass, to give them the Sacraments, and bury their dead. A priest has many hard things to do, but I do not think there is anything harder than being compelled to turn a deaf ear to the people pleading for the Sacraments, for Mass and the missions among the Tagalogs will bear fruit like those amongst the Visayans."

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