

# Eucharist



*The Supper at Emmaus, Matthias Stom, c. 1633-1639, Museo Nacional Thyssen Bornemisza, Madrid*



Describe what you can see, what is actually happening.

Think about the use of light and colour in the painting, how does this help draw you in?

Thinking about the expressions on the faces of the group, place yourself in this picture, how would you react?

How does this painting help me reflect on my role as a catechist or parent?

What is the Lord saying to me today?

*So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:28-35*

Taken from *'Way of Beauty: Rekindling Eucharistic Amazement through Visio Divina'*  
by Jem Sullivan, Ph.D

'Light radiates from a single slender candle on a table set in a bare, darkened room. Piercing the cold darkness with radiant light, the candle flame warms the faces of three men huddled over the table, which is covered in plain linen and graced only by a plate of meat. A playful dog seeks the attention of the bearded man on the left, while a boy on the right, plate in hand, pauses in rapt attention to listen in. The room and the table may be simple, but this is no ordinary meal. It is the supper at Emmaus, shared by the Risen Jesus and two disciples after their long walk together.'

'As we reflect...we step into the story of this extraordinary meal at Emmaus. Into the darkness of the evening hour the disciples carry their physical exhaustion from their long walk. They also bring to the table, in their hearts and minds, their deep disappointment and spiritual anguish over the suffering and death of Jesus, their Teacher and Lord.'

## **Light**

- chiaroscuro - 'an artistic technique of using sharp contrasts of light and shadow to create a dramatic effect - to express the spiritual intensity of the moment'.
- 'We see Jesus with broken bread, a piece in each hand. His eyes look up to heaven in a gesture of blessing as his serene face, illuminated by the candle, rivets the eyes of the disciples and the serving girl. Their eyes direct our gaze to Jesus. The warm light evokes the spiritual illumination of the moment: the light of God's love dispels the world's darkness.'
- Note the dancing flame - Christ the Light of the World is risen.

## **Eucharistic Amazement**

This is a 'dramatic moment of "Eucharistic Amazement" as the disciples raise their hands in astonished recognition of Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Their journey to Emmaus was a pilgrimage, through word and sacrament, of faith in the abiding presence of Jesus with them. This is the same presence that continues in the Church in every age and place, for every Mass, with its liturgy of the word and liturgy of the Eucharist, invites us to the same table of the Lord, where our hearts burn in the sacred presence of Jesus. And our communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus

deepens the graces we received at our baptism.'

### **You are invited**

Notice how the scene opens into our space with an empty place at the table. The artist invites us to take our place at the table of the Lord, who desires to stay with us and to nourish us with his own divine life and love as we make our way on the path of life.

### **Colour**

Christ wears red and blue symbolising his divinity (blue) and humanity (red). He is dressed in red and wrapped in a blue cloak symbolising his humanity wrapped in divinity. The men who walked with him wear brown and green symbolising the earth and God's connection to man. The colour green announces life. The earthly colours heighten the meaning of the supernatural event.

### **Pilgrimage**

Young Cleopas is wearing a scallop shell on his hat, symbol of a pilgrim.

### **Movement**

Movement conveys their emotions, they are startled when they recognise Christ. Their right hands move in harmony towards Christ.

### **The servant girl**

The servant girl witnesses this moment of grace. Her innocent face is fixed on the face of the Lord, she too participates in this moment of extraordinary revelation, and believes. She becomes a disciple in this moment, recognising her Saviour.