

The story of the road to Emmaus is probably the best loved of all the resurrection stories. Three elements of the story can explain its appeal.

Firstly, it has an element of suspense: we know the identity of the story's central figure, but we're keen to see when the others in the story will discover it.

Secondly, we can identify with the two friends of Jesus. They were not leaders, like Peter and the other apostles, but ordinary disciples, much like yourselves.

And thirdly, the story shows Jesus coming to his friends in the two ways he comes to us: through word and sacrament. It's this third aspect I'd like to say a little more about.

Remember how, at the end, the two friends recalled how their hearts burned within them as Jesus spoke to them and opened up the Scriptures to them. Jesus could make people feel that God's word was addressed personally to them.

Have you ever had the experience that the words Scripture were addressed personally to you? For this to happen regularly, we need to learn to listen.

But how can we listen to God today when our music devices are permanently attached to our ears or when the TV is automatically turned on when you enter the living room? Our modern malaise is not that we cannot hear, but that we have filled our lives with devices that stop us from listening.

Silence is a precious thing, something to be fostered. In faith, it is silence that is the path to hearing what the Lord might want to say to us. And that takes time and effort.

Though the two friends of Jesus felt their hearts burning within them as they listened to the Lord's words, they only came to recognize him "in the breaking of the bread." That phrase is the earliest name for the Eucharist.

Note that Jesus did not linger with his friends. At once he physically disappears. Jesus had not been brought back to his old life; that ended on the cross. Jesus was raised to a new life, beyond death, and to a new way in which he is recognizable to his friends.

It is not his physical body that matters anymore: it is Jesus' glorious body that now makes him present to his friends. In the Eucharist, the breaking of the bread, Christ is truly among us and with us.

Think of all who have made St Canice's their faith home, and the porch their nightly home. Think of all those who, from this place, have been companions on the journey – listening to the Word of Light; breaking the Bread of Life; proclaiming the Good News of Christ.

There are precious few institutions that can lay claim to being such a constant and consistent source of goodness, welcome, hope and healing in our society. All of this, and so much more, is worth celebrating indeed.

May the saintly monk and missionary, St Canice, continue to intercede for you today and tomorrow, and may you continue to receive and bring forth the loving presence of Christ into this part of Sydney for another 125 years.