Reflection from an excerpt of Pope Francis' message

Jesus' encounter with the two disciples of Emmaus is a fleeting one. But the entire destiny of the Church is contained within it. It tells us that the Christian community is not enclosed within a fortified citadel, but rather journeys along its most essential environment, which is the road. And there, it encounters people with their hopes and disappointments, burdensome at times. The Church listens to everyone's stories as they emerge from the treasure chest of personal conscience, in order to then offer the Word of Life, the witness of love, a love that is faithful until the end. And thus, the hearts of people reignite with hope.

We have all had difficult moments in life, dark moments in which we walked in sadness, pensive, without horizons, with only a wall before us. And Jesus is always beside us to give us hope, to warm our hearts and to say: "Go ahead, I am with you. Go ahead". The secret of the road that leads to Emmaus is simply this: despite appearances to the contrary, we continue to be loved and God will never stop loving us. God will walk with us always, always, even in the most painful moments, even in the worst moments, even in moments of defeat. That is where the Lord is. And this is our hope. Let us go forward with this hope! Because he is beside us and walks with us. Always!

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH ON EARTH DAY

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis, Laudato Si