

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am Father David, a Jesuit.

In the tradition of the Society of Jesus, we are often associated with spiritual direction, and in particular with this precious art called discernment. It is a service we try to offer: helping each person recognize how God is at work in their life.

Father Peter has asked me today to speak about this in the light of the Gospel of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

And this text is truly a school.

A school of the heart.

A school of vision.

A school of discernment.

Because discernment is not simply about choosing.

It is about learning to **choose with God**. Not for God, with God.

This is exactly what these two disciples experience:

step by step, they learn to recognize the presence of the Risen Christ in their lives, and to orient their lives from that presence.

So I would like to propose the road to Emmaus as an inner pilgrimage, a spiritual journey.

Like them, we are called to learn how to walk, step by step, with Christ, allowing our steps to gradually fall into rhythm with His.

First step: discernment begins by learning to distinguish

There are moments when we walk without understanding.

Moments when life feels dense, confused, like a sky before a storm.

We move forward... but without really knowing where we are going.

We may feel lost, disoriented.

And questions arise within us:

Why am I here? What is the meaning of my life? What is my vocation? How should I shape my future?

This is exactly where the Gospel begins.

In confusion.

Two men are walking.

They are talking.

And they carry within them this heavy sentence:

"We had hoped..." They saw Jesus dying.

Perhaps this is also our own story.

Discernment begins here,
in what is mixed and unclear.

Because our lives are not simple.

They are made of conflicting desires,

of generosity and fear,
of light... and shadow intertwined.

To discern is not to escape this complexity.
It is to enter into it, patiently,
to begin recognizing what truly leads to life.

**Second step: believe that God is already
walking with us**

As they walk, Jesus comes near.
But they do not recognize Him.

This is essential:
God is already there.

He does not wait for us at the end of the
journey.

He walks with us, right in the middle of our
doubts and questions.

Discernment is not first about finding the right
answer.

It is about entering into a relationship.

Speaking simply to God:

“This is where I am. This is what I am living.”

Discernment always begins with this inner dialogue,

a quiet, honest conversation with Christ. To speak with Jesus like your friend.

Third step: revisit your life to understand it

On the road, the disciples tell their story.

And Jesus helps them reinterpret it.

Without reviewing our life, there is no discernment.

We live many things... but we understand little.

So we must pause.

Perhaps in the evening, in silence.

We need to look back on the day.

And asking simple questions:

- What gave me life today?

- What closed me in?
- Where did I feel even a small peace?

Little by little, a light appears.

A deeper understanding of life begins to grow.

This is how we learn to notice the moments when the Lord was already speaking to us.

Fourth step: listen to the movements of the heart

Then the disciples say during the breaking of the bread:

“Were not our hearts burning within us?”

This is the heart of discernment.

God speaks through what we experience within.

There are inner movements:

- a deep and quiet peace,
- a steady joy,

- or, on the contrary, restlessness and heaviness.

Discernment means recognizing these movements,
and especially observing what remains over time.

Some ideas feel exciting at first...
but leave emptiness afterward.

Others require effort...
but bring lasting peace.

This is a simple but powerful sign:
what comes from God leads to a peace and joy that endure.

Fifth step: unite heart and reason

But discernment is not about following feelings alone.

The heart needs to be enlightened.

The disciples listen to what they feel,
but they also listen to the Scriptures.

There is a double listening:

- listening to what happens within me,
- and illuminating it through the Word of God and reality.

For example:

- This choice gives me peace... but is it right?
- This decision reassures me... but does it help me grow?
- This desire is strong... but is it aligned with the Gospel?

Discernment is a balance:

heart and reason move together.

Sixth step: recognize God in the ordinary

The disciples do not recognize Jesus on the road.

They recognize Him in a simple gesture: the breaking of bread.

God reveals Himself in ordinary moments.

In a conversation.

In a word.

In daily faithfulness.

Discernment happens there:

in how I speak to someone,

in the decision I take this week,

in the service I accept or refuse.

Seventh step: allow time

The disciples understand gradually.

Discernment takes time.

A choice matures.

A light grows.

Often, clarity comes afterward,

when a decision bears fruit,

when it brings deeper peace and life.

Time is not an obstacle.

It is a grace.

Finally: discernment leads to action

At a certain moment, the disciples rise.
They return to Jerusalem.

Discernment leads to action.

Not with perfect certainty,
but with enough peace to move forward.

A good discernment is known by its fruits:
it sets us in motion,
it opens us,
it gives life.

Brothers and sisters,

the road to Emmaus is our road.

To discern

is to learn how to listen:

to listen to God who walks with us,

to listen to our hearts,

to listen to the Word of God,

to listen to reality.

And to move, step by step,
toward what truly gives life.

So today, perhaps simply this:
do not seek the perfect answer right away...
but enter into the journey.

Because already, perhaps,
somewhere within you,
a quiet fire of the risen Lord is beginning to
burn.

Amen.