

# Can I walk to Emmaus?

**Question:** I work with some people who are not Catholic, who are trying to get me to go to a "Walk to Emmaus." It appears like a pep rally for Christ. What is this program and where did it come from? Do you think I should enroll in the program?

– *Martin Murphy, Springfield, Ky.*

**Answer:** The Walk to Emmaus is a Methodist adaptation of the Catholic Cursillo program which began in Spain in 1949. The original purpose of the Cursillo movement was to offer Catholics the spiritual means to transform their ordinary lives, especially in the environments of family, work and community.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Lutherans, Methodists and Episcopalians in the United States began to promote and popularize the Cursillo program. In 1981, Methodist leaders changed the name of the program to the "Walk to Emmaus."

The Walk to Emmaus gets its name from the episode in Luke 24:13-35 in which two disciples encounter Jesus on the road to Emmaus, speak with him about his death and resurrection, and share a meal with him. Like Christians who are blinded by their own difficulties and sadness, these two disciples' hopelessness prevented them from seeing God's redemptive purpose, but then they were moved to faith, and came to encounter Jesus at the end of the day.

The Walk to Emmaus seeks to offer Christians a parallel opportunity to rediscover Christ's presence in their lives, to gain fresh understanding of God's transforming grace, and to form friendships that foster faith and spiritual maturity. It also supports Christians' return to the world in the power of the Spirit to share the love they have received within a

hurtful and hurting world.

The Walk to Emmaus experience begins with a 72-hour short course on Christianity, comprised of 15 talks by laity and clergy on the themes of God's grace, the disciplines of Christian discipleship, and what it means to live out the Christian way of life in the face of cultural challenges. The course is wrapped in prayer and meditation and there is a daily celebration of Holy Communion. The program typically begins on Thursday evening and concludes on Sunday evening.

I would be inclined not to encourage you to attend this program, not because there is anything necessarily wrong with it, or that the leaders and participants are not sincere and well-meaning Christians, but because Catholics fit best in Catholic programs and Methodists fit best in Methodist program. Since Holy Communion is part of the program and intercommunion is not possible for Catholics, you would probably feel out of place.

I would look around among the programs of spiritual renewal available in your diocese or area and find one that suits your needs.

## **God: he or He?**

**Question:** We were always taught that any pronouns pertaining to God were to be capitalized (He, Him, etc.). However, I read many Catholic publications that do not capitalize references to God (and use he, him, etc.). I would appreciate your comments.

– *Nancy L. Horlander, Louisville, Ky.*

**Answer:** I would not be inclined to read much into the various ways that people use pronouns with reference to God. For the most part, it is a matter of literary style – which is very much up for grabs nowadays. The Catechism of the Catholic Church uses the lower case “him” and “he” when referring to

God, as does Our Sunday Visitor. Use of the upper case is common in devotional literature and prayer books.

As I say, this is mostly a matter of literary style, not of theology.

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