

The Parish of Coatham & Dormanstown

Readings, Reflection and Prayers for the Third Sunday of Easter



'While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them.'
Luke 24:15

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Alleluia Christ is risen

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today we walk with those disciples who travelled to the village of Emmaus, they had heard of Jesus' resurrection from the women in their group, but still they were experiencing the trauma of his death, the disappointment of unfulfilled expectations, and the uncertainty of what the future would hold.

The Collect

Let us pray

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life,
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

Hymn: To God be the Glory (by Fanny Crosby 1820-1915)

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life an atonement from sin
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give him the glory! Great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!
To every believer the promise of God!
the vilest offender who truly believes,
the moment from Jesus forgiveness receives.

Chorus

Great things he has taught us, great things he has done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
but purer and higher and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

Chorus

Readings

Acts of the Apostles 2:14a, 36-41

But Peter standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them. "Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified."

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Brothers, what should we do?"

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him."

And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

1 Peter 1:17-23

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish.

He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart.

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

(Luke 24:13-35)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him.

And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?"

They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near to the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is nearly over." So he went to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us, while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

One of the things I have found myself doing in this current time is trying to name the different things I am feeling, and this week the word 'lost' seemed to encompass my state of mind. I don't know if that is how you have been feeling over these past five weeks. The known landscape of our lives has suddenly changed, we have to negotiate new challenges, and we are left wondering how the landscape will be in the months and years to come.

So, when I read this week's gospel of the Walk to Emmaus, so many thoughts came rushing to mind. Two disciples set off to walk to the village of Emmaus, this was on the day when they heard that Jesus' tomb had been found empty, and the women came back with a story of angelic messengers announcing that he was risen from the dead. They set off with a destination in mind, but when we see them on the journey, we see that they are well and truly lost. The text does not tell us why they chose to go – maybe like us, who now value an hour's exercise outside of our homes each day, they needed space to think through and discuss all that had happened. To try and make sense of it all.

They meet a stranger on the road, we are told it is the risen Jesus, but they do not recognise him. Are they so lost in their thoughts and their feelings that they can no longer see who is before them? Sometimes we can be so overwhelmed by something that has happened that we cannot notice things around us, as our minds and our feelings are consumed by that one thing. It is Jesus who takes the initiative to engage with them, and he does not speak of himself, but asks them what it is that is causing them so much disquiet. This shows the loving care of Jesus, this shows the depth of love he has for them. The love that Peter calls all disciples to have for one another, 'love one another deeply from the heart' (1 Peter 1: 22b).

His question allows them to speak the truth about their own condition and their answers speak volumes about where they are. They can't understand how this 'stranger' could not know about all that had happened with Jesus' passion and death – this shows the force of the impact this event has had upon them. They speak of Jesus as a 'prophet' who did amazing deeds before God and all the people, but they still do not understand who Jesus really is, it reminds us of the question he asked his disciples, 'Who do you say that I am?', it is the question he asks each one of us.

Their answer also gives voice to disappointed expectations, they hoped, as did many, that he would redeem Israel from the yoke of Roman occupation, not understanding that he offered redemption for all people by his death on the cross, that understanding would come later. They also give voice to their sense of confusion and uncertainty, they have heard the testimony of the women, of how Jesus' tomb was empty, angelic messengers announced that he had been raised from the dead, but they hadn't seen him. What had occurred? What did it mean?

Jesus hears them, but he does not leave them in that place of disappointment, confusion and uncertainty. Sometimes we can speak of how things are for us, and it is important that we share it with each other, but the danger is we can then together become stuck in a cycle of negativity. Jesus challenges them, their faith, and their understanding, and he does it by almost shocking them, "Oh how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe."

This statement has the power to stop them in the tracks of their thinking so that they can then begin to comprehend a new perspective and understanding, a new horizon for them to travel towards. And he graciously leads them through the scriptures they have known all their lives and illuminates for them how these scriptures have spoken God's love and God's purpose as revealed in himself. Peter declares in our epistle reading, *'He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake.'* (1 Peter 1:20).

We see how this interaction with Jesus, has changed where they are – they suddenly have a new vision and a new hope, that is why when it seems as if he will go on, they urge him to stay with them and break bread. Jesus graciously does; many times in his ministry he has changed his plans to meet the need of those before him. We see it when he stays longer with the people who come to him from the town of Samaria (John 4:40), or when he took time to speak with the woman who touched the hem of his robe, as he was on his way to heal Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:21-41).

Then they sit together at table, and Jesus takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and then shares it. A simple act, but one they have seen before, as five thousand were fed, as at a final meal with his friends, and in that moment, they know who they are with – Jesus and he has risen from the dead. And so those who travelled in the darkness of disappointment and confusion during the day, are now illuminated by the light of faith and hope, as they rush back, in the darkness of the evening to share with the others their new understanding, their joy, and the new purpose and direction for all their lives.

Many of us, in this time, will feel lost, confused, uncertain of how the future landscape will be, but we can trust that the risen Lord Jesus who travelled that road to Emmaus, travels with us, calling us to know his presence and to see where he is leading us to, filling us with a new sense of perspective, and a new horizon to reach.

'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.' Hebrews 13:8

The challenge for us is to embrace the journey, and all that he reveals to us along the way, and then share the joy of knowing his risen presence with our fellow travellers.

Amen.

Prayers

The Lord is with us, let us bring to him the cry of our hearts

Loving Father,

As the disciples travelled with Jesus on the road to Emmaus may all your people seek your presence and companionship along the journeys of our lives. We remember before you all Church communities as we seek to worship you and support each other in this time of lockdown, we pray that your vision will shape our lives this week and that we will be filled with the joyous hope that the resurrection of Jesus brings.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Almighty Lord,

We thank you for your creative love which brought form and substance to the world. We pray for your world in its suffering and uncertainty brought about by the Coronavirus. We remember before you all leaders, and people in authority, that they will seek your wisdom as they lead and care for their people. We give you thanks for all scientists who are researching treatments and vaccines, and pray that you will bless their work.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Gracious Lord,

We see the love and care that Jesus extended to his disciples in their struggles, and we think of our own families and friends at this time as they deal with the consequences of social distancing, and being unable to be present physically with each other. We give you thanks for the opportunities for connection that we have with modern technology, and we pray that we may continue to find ways to connect with and support each other, and those in need. Father we also give you thanks for all who are working to ensure that we have the food and services that we require, may they know your presence and your peace.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord of all healing,

We remember all who are suffering in mind, body or spirit, and all those suffering from Covid-19. We lift to your throne of grace all those we carry on our own hearts, and pray for your healing power to be at work within them.

We give you thanks for all who work to bring healing and care to others and we pray for all who work in the NHS, the care sector, and emergency services, sustain and strengthen them in their work, and their rest.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord of life,

You travel with us throughout our lives, and even through death. We can be assured of your promise that nothing can separate us from your love. We remember before you all who have died, and we pray for their loved ones, that in their grief and confusion they will know your comfort, strength and peace, carrying them through.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Living God, Your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.

Amen

The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
And the love of God,
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
Be with us all evermore. Amen

Hymn: Word that formed creation (by Marty Haugen b.1950) (Tune: Noel Nouvelet, Tune to 'Now the green blade rises)

Word that formed creation, earth and sea and sky;
Word that brings salvation, Word that will not die;
speak now in us that we might hear your call;
Living Word of Jesus, sound within us all.

Love that formed and named us, filled this clay with breath;
Love that seeks and claims us, Love beyond all death;
come now and fire the life that flows from you;
Love that raised up Jesus, raise us up anew.

Song of joy and wonder, sound so wild and free;
voice of wind and thunder, boundless as the sea;
Music of God, the love that casts out fear;
Song that sang in Jesus, sing within us here.

God of all creation, form our hearts anew;
God of our salvation, lead us home to you;
Spirit, inspire our hearts to hear your call;
Living God of Jesus, come renew us all.