

3rd Sunday of Easter

Words of welcome

Welcome to our worship on this Third Sunday of Easter. Today we hear the story of the Emmaus Road, and the two disciples meeting and walking with Jesus, yet failing to recognise him. It's a reminder that our encounters with God are often missed and so we pray today for the eyes of faith to see Jesus in all we meet.

Opening words

Stay with us, Lord, for the day is far spent
And we have not yet recognised your face in each of our sisters and brothers.

Stay with us Lord, for the day is far spent
And we have not yet shared your bread in grace with our sisters and brothers.

Stay with us Lord, for the day is far spent
And we have not yet listened to your Word in the words of our sisters and brothers

Stay with us, Lord,
because our very night becomes day when you are there.

Collect

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us also to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace
to the glory of God the Father.

Amen

A reading from John's gospel - Tom

¹³On that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then 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?' ¹⁹Jesus 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, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But 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. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and 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. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.' ²⁵Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how

slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They 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?' ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection - Barbra

If someone asks me "Why do you believe in the Resurrection of Christ?" I usually reply that it is through reading the Acts of the Apostles and seeing the difference in the disciples between the events of Good Friday when most of them ran away in fear and how after they met the risen Jesus they were changed people.

In today's gospel reading two disciples - Cleopas and his companion - are dejected and disappointed as they begin their seven mile walk back from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They had visited Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. They had not seen Jesus before they set off home but heard that some of the women had seen a vision of angels at the empty tomb who said that Jesus was alive.

I have been trying to put myself into the shoes of these two disciples. Would I have been walking away - disappointed and devoid of all hope? I think the answer would be yes. Remember, when we read the accounts of the resurrection appearances of Jesus we have also read Luke's sequel to his gospel - The Acts of the Apostles. We know that the disciples who were at the time of the crucifixion full of fear became courageous men who were empowered to proclaim the good news with the help of the Holy Spirit.

I don't think that I would have believed the women's story. Possibly I too would have been ready to leave the busy city of Jerusalem and to return home.

However, something wonderful happens on their journey. They don't walk alone - they are accompanied by Jesus who they do not recognize.

As he explains to them the writings in the Jewish scriptures which refer to the Messiah and the suffering servant they are interested in all he has to say yet still their eyes are veiled. When they reach their home Jesus begins to walk on further but they invite him to share supper with them.

It is only when he blesses the bread that their eyes are opened and they realise it is the Lord. Then, as he disappears from their sight, they believe and are so excited that they rush back the seven miles to Jerusalem to share the good news that he is alive.

During this time of lock down to prevent the spread of COVID-19 I have been grateful

for the daily formal prayers from Common Worship which we continue to say in our homes at 9.30 each weekday morning. We remember you, our congregation, and your prayer intentions. The psalms and the scripture readings, especially during this wonderful season of Easter have been a comfort and a joy.

I pray that as we read the scriptures we may feel the love of Jesus in our hearts and may be able to say with the Emmaus disciples

'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'

Intercessions and The Lord's Prayer - Anne

Abide with us Lord, throughout this day.
Abide with us in our journeying and in our homes.
Abide with us in our seeking and in our longings.
Abide with us now and to eternity.

Lord, help us to know you in the breaking;
in the breaking of the day, in the breaking of hearts, in the breaking of bread.
Help us to know that you are risen indeed and that you travel with us on the road.
Teach us to abide in you that we may know you abide in us.

We pray for your church as we continue to proclaim your presence and your peace.
Strengthen us to walk with the downcast, the seekers, the troubled in heart, the doubters and the questioners and help us to reveal your loving presence.
Lord, abide with us
And we will abide in you.

We pray for all who journey, for those who are leaving places of pain and sorrow,
for all whose lives are in danger today.
For all pilgrims and seekers, for refugees and those who are homeless
and for all who have care of them.
Lord, abide with us
And we will abide in you

We pray for all those who are journeying towards a time of new beginnings,
remembering especially Vivian and Ruta as they await the birth of their babies.
We pray that as Jesus calmed the first disciples with his words of peace
they may know your peace and presence today.
Lord, abide with us
And we will abide in you

We give thanks that you come to meet us.
Make us aware of your presence in our homes.
Help us to be aware of you as our hearts burn within us.
Help us to see you, O Christ, in everyone we meet.
We pray for the lonely, for all who feel rejected.
Lord, abide with us
And we will abide in you

We pray for the broken-hearted, for all whose hopes have died, for all who are confused by the pain and sickness of our world.

We remember those who have asked us to pray for them, especially those who are isolated. Be with all those who care for others today. We continue our prayers for the NHS, and for those who work in care homes and in our community, remembering especially staff and residents at Monet Lodge, Ashley House, Holmfield and Brocklehurst.

We pray for all who travel by lonely paths, all who are coming to the end of their journey in this world and walk towards the sunset.

Lord, abide with us

And we will abide in you

We remember those who have died, and give thanks that your death and resurrection bring with it the promise of eternal life. Bring into your presence all who have died. We pray for the souls of Wally Marshall, Leslie Powner, Jean Peacock, Delores Hanson, Alan Heald, Peter Barker and Jack Gibson, and ask for your comfort in the lives of all who mourn.

Lord, abide with us

And we will abide in you hear us

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave 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.

Closing response - Anne

O God whose greeting we miss and whose departure we delay:
make our hearts burn with insight as we travel our ordinary road;
that, as we grasp you in the broken bread,
we may also let you go,
and return to speak your word of life. Amen.

A Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

And the blessing of God Almighty, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer
Be upon us and remain with us this day and for evermore. Amen.

Hymn

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory be to God on high;
Alleluia to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
to the Triune Majesty.

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