

Third Sunday of Easter
† Sunday, 26 April 2020



Cycle of Prayer: New Members of the Church
Keynote: The Lord is risen! We rejoice and are glad!

Acts of the Apostles 2: 14, 22-33

As we deepen our faith and understanding of the meaning of Jesus' resurrection, we join Peter with the Eleven, addressing the crowds assembled in Jerusalem for the feast. *'Listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and... signs that God worked through him when he was among you.'* The apostle then relates the basic facts of the life and death of Jesus, *'You killed him,'* Peter says, *'but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades.'* This text is another example of the **kerygma** – or primitive missionary teaching of the church. The main elements being the facts of Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection; which have been witnessed by many; and the consequences and meaning of this resurrection for those who follow Jesus in faith. *'You have made known the way of life to me,'* says Peter, *'you will fill me with gladness through your presence.'*

Responsorial Psalm 15 (16) – A psalm of confidence and happiness – Alleluia!

First Letter of Peter 1: 17-21

This passage is part of an exhortation to holiness, for a girding up of the tunic, a reminder that time is short, for the Christian disciple must prepare and get ready for the return of the Lord at the **Parousia** – the Lord's coming again. *'If you are acknowledging as your Father, one who has no favourites, and judges every one according to what he (she) has done,'* says Peter, *'you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home.'*

Then Peter speaks about how we have been redeemed – literally slaves bought and set free by Christ. *'Remember, the ransom that was paid to set you free... it was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ.'* Peter reminds us, *'you now have faith in God, who raised him [Jesus] from the dead... so that you would have faith and hope in God.'*

Gospel according to Luke 24: 13-35

This story of the two despairing despondent disciples leaving Jerusalem for the village of Emmaus after the death of Jesus has many interpretations. Themes of the journey of faith, of faith itself involving the 'seeing of Jesus'; of recognising the signs; the theme of hospitality – all make their demands.

But for me, what is important is the way Jesus joins the downcast fellows on the road, and speaks to them of the scriptures, revealing to them the meaning of the events they had witnessed. Finally the moment comes, when the disciples 'see' Jesus as Lord in the 'breaking of bread.'

'Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village... as they talked... Jesus himself came up and walked by their side, but something prevented them from recognising him... starting with Moses and going through all the prophets Jesus explained to them the passages of scripture... and then while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing, then he broke it and handed it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognised him!'

In the blindingly obvious enlightenment of faith these two, despite the lateness of the hour, rush back to their friends in Jerusalem to share their good news. If we would share their joy we need to approach the Eucharist with fresh eyes and to recognise the risen Lord, and share that knowledge and joy with others.