**3rd Sunday of Easter**

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**1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 32-33**

***The resurrection of Jesus shows the Father’s plan for all of us***

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say: This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear.”

**Responsorial: Psalm 15: 1-2, 5, 7-11**

**Response: Lord, you will show us the path of life**

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.
I say to the Lord: ‘You are my God.
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;
it is you yourself who are my prize.’

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm.

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my body shall rest in safety.
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,
nor let your beloved know decay.

You will show me the path of life,
and the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand happiness for ever.

**2nd Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-21**

***Christians are called to live in obedience to the Father. This life is founded on faith and hope in Christ who has been raised from the dead***

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.

**Gospel: Luke 24:13-35**

**Two disciples come to recognise our risen Lord in the breaking of the bread, as he opened the Scriptures to them**

Two of the disciples 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 together, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing 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 that 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 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 now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized 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.

**Reflections:**



The Emmaus story is like a gospel within the gospel. It is so rich a lesson that it serves as a summary of our own recognising and loyal bonding with Jesus Christ. For the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Cleopas ad his wife, perhaps?) the future looked grim and uncertain. For the previous few years, life had been exciting and full of hope, since they were captivated by the Gospel message of Jesus. But it now becomes clear that they hadn’t grasped some unwelcome parts of what he had said to them. His passion and death came as a brutal shock, which they could not connect with the healing, inspirational figure they had known. “We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.” How well we can empathize with this disappointed pair, because mostly we too tend to pick and choose the parts of his message that please us, and fail to take seriously other words of the Lord.

After his death on the cross, they felt all was lost. But Jesus used the Jewish scriptures to enlighten them and help them see his passion as part of a process that led to glory. The prophecies repeat the divine promises and reveal the saving plan of God. When read with faith, they have power like an electric current, inspired by the Spirit of God. When the unrecognised stranger opened the meaning of God’s Word to them, they began to understand events in a totally new light. They saw the cross of Christ not as a total disaster but as opening up a new age of grace.

Once arrived in Emmaus, they made him stay with them for supper. “Stay with us,” they said, and during the meal they recognised him in the breaking of bread. Jesus can best be known by those who want to be in his presence. Later, they realised what an impact his presence and his conversation made on each of them. “”Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” Today we pray that each of us can personally share in that experience, that our hearts too may be *burning within us.*..

The sharing of a meal among friends was a living symbol of friendship and trust. What was special about just *how* Jesus broke the bread is an intriguing question. Perhaps it was the spirit of love and sharing he invested in the act that showed them who he really was. There was a level of focus, of self-giving and sacredness unique to Jesus, something they had experienced previously, before his passion. His presence and his personality touched their hearts, and the bread he broke was not just physical. It was the food of revelation and of new horizons that they opened their hearts  to receive.

The Emmaus story speaks to people of all ages. We can see ourselves in these two despondent travelers on their journey, the faith and hope they have lost, the future they have hoped for fallen apart. And yet they met an unknown friend walking the road with them, who gave them fresh insight, and connected their challenging present situation with what they had known in the past. And, of course, Jesus reveals himself powerfully and creatively in the Eucharist, in the breaking of bread, full of the many meanings that breaking bread had for Jesus himself, both during his ministry and after the resurrection. Having dined with him, they were filled with new energy and enthusiasm, to share with others what they now knew about him. “That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem” where “they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

