

30 April 2017 (3rd Sunday of Easter, Year A)

Acts 2:14,22-33; Psalm 15(16):1-2,5,7-11; 1Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35.

Did not our hearts burn within us?

Today's gospel reading takes us back to the first day of the week – the day of the resurrection. The two disciples had been part of the events that had just transpired in Jerusalem; they had seen their leader being accused and crucified. For three years they had travelled with Jesus and listened to his teachings. They had hoped that Jesus was indeed the promised messiah! Now in their eyes everything seems to have fizzled out into nothing. Their leader is dead and they are lost. In anger and disappointment they turn their backs onto Jerusalem where it all happened, and walk away, towards Emmaus.

This can often be our story and the story of people around us. We trust in God, we bargain with him, we hope that things go according to our plans, but often what we wish and hope for does not happen. What do we do when we find ourselves lost and disillusioned? It is very tempting to turn our back on these events, abandon our faith and run away from God. If God does not want to follow our plans, then we might as well distance ourselves and follow our own plans! Cleopas and his friend had all the right reasons for being upset with God, and as they walked away they shared their pain and loss.

The good news of the resurrection is that even in our disillusionment, anger, pain and loss, God still travels with us. God will never abandon us. Often our eyes are held from recognising him, but he is still there with us. Often we are too angry to see Jesus who walks with us, yet he is still present within us and within our friends who journey with us and support us.

Jesus does not run away from his disciples; he challenges them to see that it was necessary for him to suffer and die before he rises again. All this has been witnessed to in the Old Testament. Even with us, we need to patiently listen to the voice of God speaking within us and through those who accompany us.

At the end of the journey the two disciples insist on Jesus to spend the night with them. There he takes over and becomes the host; blessing and breaking the bread, a symbol of the Eucharist. This is where they recognise Jesus. Each time we gather as a community and participate in the Eucharist, we are invited to listen to our own stories within the light of faith and of God's word. We bring our pain and disillusionment to God and listen to God as he explains to us that all this is necessary before we can experience our own resurrection. He then invites us to eat and drink of his Body and Blood in the Eucharist, the food for our journey. The Eucharist sustains us as we travel forward.

Let us not be afraid to travel, even if we find ourselves going away from Jerusalem, let us try to keep looking for Jesus who is always with us wherever we are.

Fr Mario