

all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, 'What matters are you discussing as you walk along?' They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' he asked. 'All about Jesus of Nazareth' they answered 'who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.'

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. 'It is nearly evening' they said 'and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

# Reflections on the Gospel



# THE SAVING WORD

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER / A

26 APRIL 2020

## EMMAUS IS OUR STORY

A feature of the resurrection stories in the Gospels is the way in which the risen Lord appears to people exactly as they are: to the disciples in their fear, to Mary Magdalene in her sorrow, to Thomas in his doubting. The encounter told in today's Gospel is no exception. Jesus appears to two disciples in their bitter disillusionment and loss of hope.

By not revealing himself to them immediately but simply accompanying them as a fellow traveller, the Lord respects their experience, letting them tell their story to the end. Only then does he pick it up and weave it into his own instruction.

He shows them how the recent events in Jerusalem had followed the path indicated for the Messiah in the Scriptures, rather than that of Israel's political liberation that had been central to their own messianic hope.

Captivated by this companion, the disciples constrain him to be their guest. But once indoors, a reversal takes place: they, who had offered hospitality to him, find themselves guests at a table he provides. The Eucharistic gestures at the breaking of the bread reveal him at last as risen Lord.

Instantly, he vanishes from their sight, and they hurry back to Jerusalem to share with the other disciples their experience of the risen Lord.

This wonderful story perfectly models the life of the Church. Fortified by the Spirit, the Church continues through Word and Sacrament the mission of the Lord. It walks alongside disillusioned, hurt humanity, expounding the Scriptures, and in the Eucharist provides the hospitality of God.

**Brendan Byrne, SJ**

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## FIRST READING

Acts 2:14, 22-33

**A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

*It was impossible for him to be held by the power of Hades.*

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice: 'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him:

I saw the Lord before me always, / for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me. / So my heart was glad / and my tongue cried out with joy: / my body, too, will rest in the hope / that you will not abandon my soul to Hades / nor allow your holy one to experience corruption. / You have made known the way of life to me, / you will fill me with gladness through your presence.

'Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.'

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## RESP PSALM

Ps 15:1-2, 5, 7-11. R. v. 11

**R. Lord, you will show us the path of life. (or Alleluia!)**

I. 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. **R.**

2. 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. **R.**

3. 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. **R.**

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

## SECOND READING

1 Pet 1:17-21

**A reading from the first letter of St Peter**

*The ransom that was paid to free you was the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ.*

If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home. Remember, the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down 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; who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for your sake. Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for that very reason – so that you would have faith and hope in God.

■ **The word of the Lord.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Lk 24:32

**Alleluia, alleluia! / Lord Jesus, make your word plain to us: / make our hearts burn with love when you speak. / Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL

Lk 24:13-35

**A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.**

*They recognised him at the breaking of the bread.*

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about