

Third Sunday of Easter

Prayers, Readings, Reflection and Song.

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you, before you and within you.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith

**All God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life in the water
of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us, nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned
against you and our neighbour.
We have wounded your love and marred your image in
us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

God promises us a place with him for ever and he has raised us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we know his forgiveness and peace and the freedom to serve him in newness of life.

All Amen

The Collect for the day

Let us pray that we may love one another as Christ has loved us.

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen
life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Gospel, Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of them 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 and discussing, 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 this 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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All sing **Praise to you O Christ.**

Reflection

The story of the Emmaus Road has always been for me, the key to understanding the way we normally worship together as church family, Sunday by Sunday.

Think of this story as a blueprint – a map – that guides us through our worship, step by step.

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples walk and talk together – there is no expectation of the sacred, they are simply in one another’s company, sharing with one another. Then their circle is widened and they share together with a third person who invites them to say more, and who listens.

Well, that’s a lot like what we do when we gather in church – even as we gather now, around a screen, or a print-out of this service, in our own homes. We step into a Holy Space and we feel connected with others. We have a natter, share stories from our week, and then we change our focus slightly and say words together, with one voice, we have a focus – and that focus is God. We start from where we are, and then we widen the circle around us to include others: we become as one with one another. *We gather.*

Back on the Emmaus road, the issues raised are confronted with reference to the scriptures, which offers greater clarity and a new understanding.

Well, that’s just what we do in worship. We make reference to the scriptures. We delve deeper into God’s story in the expectation that it will speak to our story, and give us a fresh perspective on life. We don’t just read in silence, but we share the word of God, and then someone – usually me – breaks that word open and shines a light on what is buried within. *We gather and we receive.*

In our gospel narrative the act of fellowship is initiated, and carried out together – hospitality, table fellowship - and in that, Jesus is recognised for the first time.

Most symbolic of all our actions in church is Communion, the Eucharist, the taking, blessing, breaking and sharing of bread and wine. For me, and for many of us, it is the central focus of our worshipping life together. Our other responses include the prayers of intercession, the sharing of the peace and the

singing of hymns of praise. These are all responses to hearing and witnessing God's action in our lives. *We gather, we receive, we respond.*

The disciples and their world feel transformed – they go out to find others to spread the good news.

Our worship does not end when the priest walks out! Oh, no. The service is ended, let the worship begin! We are transformed (on some level, small or great) and we take our transformed selves out into the world and we seek to transform the world. *We gather, we receive, we respond, we grow.*

The journey the disciples took on that dusty road - deep in the trauma of what they witnessed on Good Friday; and yet ultimately transformed into people of the resurrection – this is the journey that each of us are invited to take in our worshiping lives. More than that, it is the journey we are invited to take as a whole community – as the body of Christ.

When I applied for the job as your Rector, I read in your parish profiler that you believed you were a church of the Emmaus Road. A community that seeks to meet people on the road, and to encourage them by the word of God and the breaking of bread, that they might know the power of the love of God. I remember how profoundly that spoke to me, and I feel blessed to be walking with you on that road.

At the moment of course, things are different, difficult, dislocated. We can worship together and pray together and speak and listen to one another. But we cannot make that central act of breaking bread together.

What does that mean for our Eucharistic life as the body of Christ? Does everything fall apart without that central action? Can the risen Christ still be made known to us without the breaking of the bread?

Of course he can. The fact that we cannot share Communion is deeply sad, and I miss it greatly. But communion is not the only form that Eucharist can take. When we understand our faith with deep maturity, we can see that our lives can be a Eucharistic offering. We can live the Eucharist, even if we cannot share the bread and wine.

Just as Jesus took, blessed, broke and shared the bread with the disciples – we too can take, bless, break and share our lives.

We can be intentional with our lives – realise and rejoice that this life is a precious and beautiful gift given to us. Whatever constraints and hardship we may face, life in all its messy glory is irreplaceable and sacred. That is what it means to ‘take’.

We can bless our lives and the world around us, by giving thanks to God for every moment and every inch of it. Exploring it, protecting it, creating with it. Recognising that we live in a Christ-soaked world, in which not one part can be separated from the love of God.

We can break our lives. Not break-down (though sometimes that must be the case) but break apart. Break apart the habits and prejudices and assumptions that make us a prisoner to our own egos. Break apart our lives by saying not *my* will but *thy* will be done. When we break down these the walls and doors, then God’s light can truly shine in our lives.

And we can share our lives. Pick up the phone, get out the writing paper, say hello (from a safe distance) to the neighbour whose name you never knew. A life lived only for ourselves is next to no life at all. These times are teaching us that we are more connected than ever before, and our hardships and our joys are not our own alone.

Take, bless, break and share. This is the pattern of the Eucharist. This must be the pattern of our lives.

Amen.

Song

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near

In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful 357

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The first system contains the first two lines of the lyrics. The second system contains the next two lines. The third system contains the final line. Chord symbols are placed above the vocal line: Dm, F, Bb, C, Dm, F, C in the first system; Bb, A, Dm, C, F, Bb in the second system; and C, Dm, C, F in the third system. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' in the second system.

Dm F B^b C Dm F C
In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful; in the Lord I will re - joice!

B^b A Dm C F B^b
Look to God; do not be a - fraid. Lift up your voic - es, the Lord is

C Dm C F
near; lift up your voic - es, the Lord is near.

Prayers of Intercession

Pray for one another – those in our church community

Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World

Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed

Pray for the dying, and those who mourn

Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

All Accept these prayers

for the sake of your son,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

The Peace

The two disciples told what had happened on the road to Emmaus, and how Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All and also with you.

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us

All 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.

The Blessing.

God the Father,
by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,
strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always

All **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

All **Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!**



EASTER