

Reflection for the Third Sunday of Easter.

***“Our own hope had been that He would have been the one to set Israel free.”***

Dear Friends, how often we entertain hope, especially during this pandemic – hope for the release of Covid19’s grip on so many of the world’s population – hope for finding a vaccine that will lessen the impact of the virus on our bodies – hope that the sick may recover – hope that the bereaved will be comforted and that those who have died may enjoy the light of the risen Christ - hope for a lessening of restrictions so that life may assume a more normal pattern – hope that jobs may remain in place once we are allowed to return to work – hope that our family members will be kept safe – hope that those in the caring professions and our key-workers will be kept safe – hope that the lessons we are learning about the important values in life may remain with us and shape our future.

So many hopes that our hearts give rise to each day. So many of these hopes are inspired by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. As Saint Paul says: ***“Hope will not disappoint us because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.” (Romans 5:6)***

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were emptied of hope. The One in whom they had placed their hope had died a brutal death and their hopes had been buried with Him. Our Lord accompanied them as they walked along but ***“something prevented them from recognising Him.”*** We are told: ***“They stopped short; their faces downcast.” (Luke 24:16)***

In His dialogue with these two disciples Our Lord helped them to rediscover the source of Christian Hope. He explained to them the passages in the scripture that were about Himself. Later they would tell the other disciples ***“Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us.”*** As they draw near to Emmaus they press Jesus to stay with them. ***“It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over”***, they say. Jesus stays with them and while He is with them at Table, he breaks the Bread and gives it to them ***“and theirs eyes were opened and they recognised Him, but He had vanished from their sight.”***

Dear Friends how much our Lord wishes to give substance to our hopes. How much He wishes to deepen our Faith in His risen presence. How much He wishes to dispel the clouds of despair and assure us that ***“With God on our side, who can be against us?”***

May we draw near to Christ and press Him to stay with us. As we ponder the words of scripture may we rediscover the joy of His presence within our hearts and minds. May His love awaken us to continue to show love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control.”

In the opening prayer of today’s Mass all our priests prayed:

***“May Your people exult for ever, O God, in renewed youthfulness of spirit, so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption, we may look forward in confident hope to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.”***

***“This Day was made by the Lord. Let us rejoice and are glad.”***