

Reading and Reflection for Sunday 26 April 2020 Easter 3
Readings *Acts 2.14a,36-41.1* *Peter 1.17-23*

White
Luke 24.13-35

Opening Words

We are the Easter people, and Alleluia is our song.

There is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God, no height nor depth, no death nor life, no isolation nor social distancing, no virus nor scaremongering, no ill health nor anxiety, no riches nor debts, nor things present nor things to come can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN!

Roman's 28 amended Vanda Perrett

Collect of the Day

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, Amen.

Gospel Luke 24.13-35

¹³On that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then 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?' ¹⁹Jesus 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, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But 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. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and 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. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.' ²⁵Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to

believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But 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. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They 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?' ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

This is the prayer used for the medieval pilgrim as they set out on their journey to Canterbury, or Santiago Compostela or the Holy Land:

Grant unto thy servants here present, who are setting forth amongst us, the company of guardian angels, that they being protected by thy aid, may be seized by no fear of evil, nor be smitten by any grievous sickness, nor troubled by any enemy lying in wait to assail them, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

The story of the Emmaus road is one of my favourite readings in Luke's gospel. The town of Emmaus was not an aspirational place to live, it was a center for the military on leave, a den of gambling, women and drink! And these people who had followed Jesus, by setting off for Emmaus were signaling that they had given up. They wanted to lose themselves and their problems in women and wine, and gambling. They were gambling with their futures and turning their back on Jesus' way of living. These disciples had heard the news of Jesus' risen life, had seen the empty tomb and yet had not believed. (Strange Thomas has the name of the Doubter when these disciples doubted and then fled!) Walking with them was someone who had obviously not been kept up to date on the "Twitter feed, Facebook, WhatsApp, TV or radio"! The stranger did not understand what concerned the walkers. He challenged them with sloppy thinking and a lack of applied theology! These disciples thought they KNEW what had happened, soon found out they did not really know the truth. They

thought they were kept in the loop, but their news was indeed “fake news”. Jesus is revealed in the breaking of the bread, because it was at this point the breaking of the real news happened. Jesus was not only risen from the dead, he was here, teaching, encouraging and feeding the disciples, as he had been doing throughout his ministry.

During the Covid19 pandemic, we are relying on the TV, radio and other media to give us the news, to help us define our world in this unexpected time, but we need to be aware of the fake news, those who wish to overexaggerate, who wish to bring fear. But there is another, worse, fake news. This is news that does not allow for faith, for God, for hope and for strength from him. Our gospel – our good news is that we know the presence and strength of our God to be with us, to walk with us, to dine with us, to be with us at our sleeping and our rising, every day. Remember this real news is also part of our definition of the world, and definition of who we are. So my dear friends, stand tall and proud, straighten your crowns and remember you are part of the royal family of God, sons and daughters of the King of Heaven. That is the good news for all, every day whether we stay at home or journey through the world!

Living God, your Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in all his redeeming work; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

Prayers

Bless all who work in stressful situations; healthcare, teaching, law enforcement, social services and other occupations where patience, love and perseverance can wear thin, and daily stress levels rise.

Keep them safe and keep them well, equipped to follow their vocation through the most difficult of times. And at the end of their day, grant rest.

We pray for our communities - that snapshot of humanity with all ages, backgrounds, education, employment status, politics and religious viewpoint who are our neighbours in the streets where we live.

We pray for all of them; not only those we know by name and chat to through the day, but also less familiar faces about whom we know so little and pass by with just a smile. All in need of your love at this time.

Bless their homes and families, and let your love and peace so shine within this community that smiles turn to conversations, and strangers become friends.

We pray this through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Amen

Give wisdom, Lord, to all in authority, not only leaders of nations but local communities, that actions and words are prompted by the needs of others, not personal gain. That all might ask the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' and, as if seeing through your eyes, want nothing but the best for them.

Loving God, what we desire is this; that people see not us, but through our smile, greeting, helping hand or helpful word, your love reach out and touch, maybe at a time of need. Keep us focussed through this day on being your servants in this place, or wherever you might take us, and may your name be glorified.

A prayer based on words of Julian of Norwich

Lord, you are God, Lord, you are in all things. Lord, you do all things. You never remove your hands from your works, nor ever will, without end. You guide all things to the end that you ordained them for, before time began, with the same power and wisdom and love with which you made them; How could anything be amiss?

God of the guiding star, the bush that blazes

Show Us Your Way

God of the stormy seas, the bread that nourishes

Teach Us Your Truth

God of the still, small voice, the wind that blows where it chooses

Fill Us With Life

God of the elements, of our inward and outward journeys

Set Our Feet On Your Road Today. May God Bless Us With A Safe Journey

May The Angels And Saints Travel With Us

May We Live This Day In Justice And Joy. Amen.

Bless to us, O God, the earth beneath our feet,

Bless to us, O God, the path whereon we go,

Bless to us, O God, the people whom we meet,

Today, tonight and tomorrow. Amen

Iona Community

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