

READINGS, REFLECTION AND PRAYERS FOR 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

A READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:14, 22-33 (C.E.V.)

Peter stood with the eleven apostles and spoke in a loud and clear voice to the crowd: Friends and everyone living in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I have to say about Jesus from Nazareth!

God proved that he sent Jesus to you by having him work miracles, wonders, and signs. All of you know this.

God had already planned and decided that Jesus would be handed over to you. So you took him and had evil men put him to death on a cross. But God set him free from death and raised him to life. Death could not hold him in its power.

What David said are really the words of Jesus,
“I always see the Lord near me, and I will not be afraid with him at my right side. Because of this, my heart will be glad, my words will be joyful and I will live in hope. The Lord won’t leave me in the grave. I am his holy one, and he won’t let my body decay. He has shown me the path to life, and he makes me glad by being near me.”

My friends, it is right for me to speak to you about our ancestor David. He died and was buried, and his tomb is still here. But David was a prophet, and he knew that God had made a promise he would not break. He had told David that someone from his own family would someday be king. David knew this would happen, and so he told us that Christ would be raised to life.

He said that God would not leave him in the grave or let his body decay. All of us can tell you that God has raised Jesus to life!

Jesus was taken up to sit at the right side of God, and he was given the Holy Spirit, just as the Father had promised. Jesus has given the Spirit to us and that is what you are now seeing and hearing.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM 16: 1-2, 5,7-8,9-10,11

RESPONSE: LORD, YOU WILL SHOW US THE PATH OF LIFE.

Keep me, O God, in you I take refuge; I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord.”
O LORD, You are my portion and cup; You hold me fast.

I bless the LORD who counsels me; even in the night my heart directs my heart.
I set the LORD ever before me; with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.

Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices, my body, too, abides in safety;
You will not leave my soul in the grave, nor let my body decay.

You will show me the path to life, the fullness of joy in your presence,
the delights at your right hand forever.

RESPONSE: LORD, YOU WILL SHOW US THE PATH OF LIFE.

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PETER 1:17-21

(C.E.V.)

Beloved

Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially,
live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear.

You know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold
that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed to you from your ancestors.

You were redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

He was chosen before the creation of the world,
but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him,
and so your faith and hope are in God.

*Lord Jesus, open the Scriptures to us;
may our hearts burn with faith, hope and love.*

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE 24:13-35

(C.E.V.)

That same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, Jesus came near and walked along beside them - but they did not know who he was.

Jesus asked them, "What were you talking about as you walked along?"

The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy. The one named Cleopas asked Jesus, "Are you the only person from Jerusalem who didn't know what was happening there these last few days?"

"What do you mean?" Jesus asked.

They answered:

Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth.

By what he did and said, he showed that he was a powerful prophet, who pleased God and all the people. Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free!

But it has already been three days since all this happened.

Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. Some men from our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they didn't see Jesus either.

Then Jesus asked the two disciples, “Why can’t you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said? Didn’t you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?” Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets.

When they came near the village where they were going, Jesus seemed to be going farther. They begged him, “Stay with us! It’s already late, and the sun is going down.” So Jesus went into the house to stay with them. After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared.

They said to each other, “When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures, didn’t our hearts burn with fire?”

So they left and returned to Jerusalem. The two disciples found the eleven apostles and the others gathered together. They learned from the group that the Lord was really alive and had appeared to Peter. Then the disciples from Emmaus told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread.

REFLECTION – ADAPTED FROM PATRICIA STEVENSON RSJ

<https://www.sosj.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Easter-ThirdSunday-YearA.pdf>

This Autumn, 2020, many people feel an “earnest longing” to be free from the threat of the Coronavirus itself and its effects –sickness and the appalling loss of life, difficulties amongst the leaders of the nations, unemployment, bankruptcy, anxieties for both individuals and our families, lockdowns and limits on our travel, the closure of our Churches etc., etc.. For Catholics and people of all faiths, we need to find ways to nurture and live out our spiritual lives. We can do it - for the Spirit of God is here with us all!

In Greek, the word “Emmaus” means “an earnest longing”. Jesus, who was trusted as the hope of Israel, had been crucified. The disciples on the road to Emmaus had “an earnest longing” to understand God’s purposes and as to who this apparent failure Jesus was.

On the road, they were feeling highly anxious and were joined by One whom they did not recognize. The stranger took them back to the teaching of the scriptures – God’s promises of a new vision of the world, a new creation. Surely, they had heard these texts before! When the stranger explained them, it was as though “their hearts were on fire”! How would their understanding of these texts help them respond in their “new reality”?

They asked the stranger to stay with them; they longed to understand more. At table, through his simple action - his blessing, and breaking the bread and sharing with them - their blindness to the identity of Jesus Risen amongst them and to his purpose, lifted.

CoVid 19 has dislocated many of us from the way of life we have been used to. We even have to have “essential” purposes to be on the roads! Thankfully, in our society there is help available which many of us can call on. If you’re a senior and need community support, the

Queensland Government's Care Army's volunteers want to help you – to talk to you over the phone, to help you with groceries and medications. Please phone 1800 173 349. Please look up the Queensland Care Army website for great ideas:

<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/carearmy>

Perhaps you know the pain of people who cannot call upon the government for financial help.

Perhaps we have three important needs during this time:

(1) to nourish our spiritual lives for the good of the whole of our lives.

We cannot go to Mass but we need to pray and to nurture our belonging with our community of faith. We need to pray as we can. We can be like athletes in training and ask our coach, the Spirit of God, to guide us. There are ways to rediscover the Rosary, to meditate and to find other ways to pray.

(2) We need routines to help us organise our days attending to all our needs.

Talking to someone may help us with our ideas. Maybe it is time for a new goal in our interests or for a new interest - for something we can do at home or from home.

(3) We need to find ways to care for and connect with others. Maybe a phone call to a friend, our Parish Office 3398 3697, the Care Army 1800 173 349; or Lifeline 13 11 14 could help us discuss ideas which would work for us for connecting with or caring for others.

The journey to Emmaus empowered the disciples. They returned to Jerusalem where they had come from with momentous grief and anxiety – but with new insights and confidence in their faith, hope and love. Mary MacKillop wrote, “There where you are, God is.”

Mary is encouraging us today also amid our confusion and with our “earnest longings”. Let's ask the Spirit of God to empower us for the good of many in our circumstances.

Prayer for our World

from Stephen Davies/CAFOD

Creator God,
who has given us this beautiful world,
appointed us as its guardians
and gifted us with everything we need,
forgive us for the times we cause it harm.
Forgive us for the times our way of life disadvantages our neighbours.
Inspire us to care for the environment,
to help rebuild lives and communities
and to share in the griefs and anxieties, joys and hopes of all your people,
so that all your creation,
the “earnest longing” in all peoples
and the faith, hope and love of all who know You, may flourish.
So be it! Amen!
