

Prayer Resource



Week Beginning: 27 April 2020

Theme: Beautiful Certainty

Reflection: "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"

Readings: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Psalm 15; 1 Peter 1:17-21; Luke 24:13-35

A news bulletin recently expressed our grim times with the headline: 'The only certainty is uncertainty.' In such times as these it is wonderful to receive a Good News Bulletin that includes word that through the Holy Spirit (Acts) 'Our Lord shows us the path of life, and the fullness of joy in God's presence' (Psalm 15); and that through Christ we have

come to trust in God who raised Jesus from the dead (1 Peter). And the main headline: On our Emmaus journey of faith, Jesus is always with us, even when we are anxious or overburdened and may feel we are losing our way we can recognise his presence in the very breaking of the bread.

The Emmaus story is like a gospel within the gospel. It is so rich a lesson that it serves as a summary of our own recognising and loyal bonding with Jesus Christ. For the two disciples on the road to Emmaus the future looked grim and uncertain. For the previous few years, life had been exciting and full of hope, since they were captivated by the Gospel message of Jesus. But it now becomes clear that they hadn't grasped some unwelcome parts of what he had said to them. His passion and death came as a brutal shock, which they could not connect with the healing, inspirational figure they had known. "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." How well we can empathize with this disappointed pair, because mostly we too tend to pick and choose the parts of his message that please us, and fail to take seriously other words of the Lord.

After his death on the cross, they felt all was lost. But Jesus used the Jewish scriptures to enlighten them and help them see his passion as part of a process that led to glory. The prophecies repeat the divine promises and reveal the saving plan of God. When read with faith, they have power like an electric current, inspired by the Spirit of God. When the unrecognised stranger opened the meaning of God's Word to them, they began to understand events in a totally new light. They saw the cross of Christ not as a total disaster but as opening up a new age of grace.

Once arrived in Emmaus, they made him stay with them for supper. "Stay with us," they said, and during the meal they recognised him in the breaking of bread. Jesus can best be known by those who want to be in his presence. Later, they realised what an impact his presence and his conversation made on each of them. "'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'" Today we pray that each of us can personally share in that experience, that our hearts too may be burning within us...

The sharing of a meal among friends was a living symbol of friendship and trust. What was special about just how Jesus broke the bread is an intriguing question. Perhaps it was the spirit of love and sharing he invested in the act that showed them who he really was. There was a level of focus, of self-giving and sacredness unique to Jesus, something they had experienced previously, before his passion. His presence and his personality touched their hearts, and the bread he broke was not just physical. It was the food of revelation and of new horizons that they opened their hearts to receive.

The Emmaus story speaks to people of all ages. We can see ourselves in these two despondent travellers on their journey, the faith and hope they have lost, the future they have hoped for fallen

apart. And yet they met an unknown friend walking the road with them, who gave them fresh insight, and connected their challenging present situation with what they had known in the past. And, of course, Jesus reveals himself powerfully and creatively in the Eucharist, in the breaking of bread, full of the many meanings that breaking bread had for Jesus himself, both during his ministry and after the resurrection. Having dined with him, they were filled with new energy and enthusiasm, to share with others what they now knew about him. "That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem" where "they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread." Like the early disciples who proclaimed the good news bulletin we can equally share a gospel message that is a beautiful certainty!

A Hymn for Sharing Live in the Spirit (by Christine McCann)

Live in the Spirit of your maker, Follow the path that his Son has made.
Know that he will be with you always; His love will never end. (x2)

Christ said, come and follow me and do not be afraid. I will be beside you forever.
Find in me the strength you need to follow where I call.
Trust in my Father's love and trust in me.

He said, Come to me when burdened, come to me when in pain.
I shall give you strength and I shall heal you.
I shall be the fountain and source of life for you.
Trust in the Father's love and trust in me.

So do not fear the winding road on which you lose your way.
He said Seek and you will find me.
In all you say, in all you do, you'll find him very near.
Trust in the Father's love and trust in him.

Prayers

Our response this week is: May our hearts burn within us, with faith in you Risen Lord
(Amen)

Monday: As we rejoice in the Resurrection, we pray that our eyes, too, are opened to the wonderful unity which Jesus shares with us in the most Holy Eucharist. R/.

Tuesday: We pray for those who have lost faith in God, that as they journey through their daily lives they too may recognise the marvellous gifts that Jesus offers R/.

Wednesday: We pray that we may embrace the marginalised such as the homeless, those imprisoned and those suffering with a mental health illness. R/.

Thursday: We pray all who are ill and those who are dying; may they receive comfort R/.

Friday: We pray all who have died; may they receive eternal peace. R/