

Reflections on the Readings for the 3rd Sunday of Easter A

Luke 24:13-35

“Journey” is the key concept for our understanding of this story of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus: both their journey then and ours today. Essentially, they are journeying in the wrong direction. They have given up and turned their backs on Jerusalem and all that has happened. As they talk about what happened, and the stranger joins them and explains the Scriptures to them, in retrospect they recognise that it was Jesus accompanying them all the time. They recognise him at the breaking of the bread at the meal in the inn, but he disappears from their sight. As with Mary Magdalene meeting the Gardener, Jesus, at the Empty Tomb, the Risen Lord is not to be held on to at their whim and wish. Now, they realise their mistake and immediately journey back to Jerusalem where, with the other disciples, their story is affirmed, and they await the coming of the Spirit. Their journey mirrors our journey of faith: often only realising in retrospect that the Risen Lord has accompanied us, especially in our darkest times. In the company of other believers, we, too, are reaffirmed in our faith and can continue our own journey of faith through life.

Acts 2:14, 22-33

We come right back to the beginnings of the preaching of the Gospel in this extract. The apostles have, literally, just burst out of the Upper Room, where they had received the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire that came upon their heads. As soon as they began to speak, you will remember, everyone heard them speaking in their own native languages. Now, attention focuses on Peter, who pulls no punches (“You crucified and killed him by the hands of lawless men”) in addressing the crowd about Jesus’ Death and Resurrection. We are given the final part of this incident next Sunday when the crowd asks, “Brothers what shall we do?” Perhaps this might be a useful question to ponder for us.

1 Peter 1:17-21

This letter is written to communities in Northern and Western Asia Minor (Turkey). Although there are references to Jewish traditions – especially in this passage the Passover (“a lamb without blemish or spot”) – the audience seems to consist mainly of Gentiles. Facing persecution, the writer encourages his audience to be faithful to their commitment to Christ, “Through him (you) are believers in God, who raised him from the dead...” What was given to and in Christ will be theirs, if they remain steadfast.

Prayer

Lord, be with us as we journey in faith. Help us to be aware of, and recognise, your presence at our side at every moment. Amen.