

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Eastertide (A)

26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

'Invite Jesus into your home!'

Acts 2: "You killed Him, but God raised Him to life."

Ps 15: You will not leave my soul amongst the dead.  
1Pt 1: Through Him you now have faith in God,  
who raised Him from the dead.

Lk 24: 13–35: the road to Emmaus

Alongside the tragic statistics of death from the corona-virus each day — and our own parish has not been untouched by such sadness — yet there is also at the same this incongruous beauty of so many sunny, warm, days, almost like summer. On the walks I've been taking in the countryside in these past few weeks, I don't think I've seen a drop of rain; but instead brilliant signs of nature bursting with life: amongst other things I think of the bright greens of hillsides and of budding trees in bright sunshine; of carpets of countless thousands of bluebells in various woods and coppices; of so many butterflies everywhere. Maybe these things are always there, but the chance to be out, alone, and in nice weather, brings them so much to the fore: life springing forth in this Eastertime / springtime.

The 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus, in that famous passage from Lk 24 that we hear in the Gospel today, were on a walk, but they certainly weren't looking properly, and weren't ready to see signs of new life. "Their faces [were] downcast," we are told. They were despondent, taken up with their

anxieties, not having eyes open to see what was happening around them. How might we imagine their thinking, as they trudge along the road, downcast? — isolated from their community, upset by the sudden tragedy of death, thinking that 'everything has collapsed,' not knowing what will happen now, just heading home and going to stay in, unsure when to risk coming out again. Sounds familiar?!! Yes, maybe we too have got into a pattern of thinking that is a bit the same — despondent about what has happened, stuck at home, only able to see the tragedy and death, and unable to see how we will get out of it, or out again at all!

Into this situation, for sure, Jesus comes. As surely as He did on the road to Emmaus, for Cleopas and his companion, Jesus comes and walks alongside us. We must not doubt it! We must not have our eyes closed as those disciples did! — we must have our eyes opened to Jesus who comes and walks with us, reassuring us and explaining to us, in His own divine logic, what has happened, and what will happen. There are three key features of the Lord's approach to those disheartened disciples: (i) the Scriptures; (ii) the invitation to stay with them; and (iii) the Eucharist. These are three ways in which we can most certainly know that the Lord Jesus walks with us, speaks to us,

and strengthens us with a sight that is clear and not downcast.

(i) The first, then, is to open our hearts to the Scriptures. At the present time, what better to ponder than the richness of the bible texts, available in all sorts of ways, including online. Think of the ways Jesus so often used Scripture to explain His message, and how the apostles and their early collaborators committed Jesus's own powerful words and saving deeds to a remembered oral form, and then to writing. Read the Scriptures, then, in whatever way is best for you, even just a few verses of the Gospel a day. "Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures?" Jesus can truly speak to us, personally, calmly, as we read the sacred Word.

(ii) Invite Jesus into your home! Like the disciples at Emmaus, make sure you have actually brought Jesus truly into your home. We are at home so much more, at this time, many of us — so make sure you are bringing Jesus into your home, and making it a holy place ... through placing a crucifix prominently at the heart of your home, and an image of Our Lady or the saints, too; making a proper time of prayer central to your day; living and believing that the Lord dwells with you through the Spirit He has given you, not side-lining Him, but making Him at home in your home, a welcome guest, a beloved friend.

(iii) And then, the Holy Eucharist. The culmination of Jesus's time with the disciples in Emmaus was His revelation to them at the offering of the Eucharist. How much we miss the public celebration of Mass together! But, in your homes, please unite yourself daily, and especially on Sunday, with the Holy Eucharist, the loving and living presence of the Son of God. Whilst we cannot be with Him at the sacramental celebration of His sacrifice and His dwelling with us, yet we can most certainly, each of us, recite an Act of Spiritual Communion, affirming to our dear Saviour that we so desire Him to be with us, in our hearts, and helping us to bear these sad times with a peace and joy that only He can bring. Jesus never leaves us; He is always here by our side. Let's receive His gifts, His grace, His presence, as He can offer them even (and especially) in times of difficulty. Let's make that Act of Spiritual Communion with Jesus together:

*"My Jesus,  
I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament.  
I love You above all things  
and I desire You with all my heart.  
Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally,  
I ask You to come spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if you were already in my heart  
and unite myself to You completely.  
Please do not let me ever be separated from You. Amen."*