



Third Sunday of Easter 2005

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

Autumn encourages walking. Colours are mellow after the too bright light of summer. Walking or journeying is a symbol of learning. To be “on the way” describes a process in our thinking.

Today’s story from Luke is a classic journey story. It’s often referred to as the Emmaus story and this is significant as the word Emmaus can mean “earnest longing”.

Two disciples were going away from Jerusalem. One is called Cleopas so we can assume that the other was his wife. Jerusalem had been the site of their disappointment, their grief at the loss of the vision of a new age that was hinted at in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus was dead, and feeling that there was nothing to keep them in the city, they headed for home.

As they walked they talked about their experiences trying to find meaning in examining their story. As they spoke Jesus was with them but they did not recognise him. The risen Christ, like God in the first garden walks alongside the couple in friendship.

Jesus initiates the conversation. “What’s wrong?” They are astonished that he is not familiar with what preoccupies them. When we are in pain we imagine that it so fills our consciousness that we cannot imagine that it is not obvious to everyone.

Cleopas tells the story of Jesus, calling him a prophet, powerful in word and deed, a man revered by God and the people. He names Jesus as the hope of Israel, a new Moses that would free the people from their burdens. Cleopas’ description indicates that the disciples believed that the death of Jesus marked the end of his ministry and hence the end of their dreams.

He continued with his story about the high level of confusion that that made Jesus’ death even worse there were wild stories of abandoned tombs, and visions of angels. Jesus, who had spent so much time encouraging the disciples to reflect, challenges the pair to go to the Scriptures. Being with Moses and the prophets Jesus reminded them of passage where God had promised that there would be a new creation, a new vision of the world.

The couple had arrived home. Jesus went to continue on his way. “Stay with us!” the disciples realised that they had much more to meditate on. Jesus accepted their invitation.

They sat down at the table. Jesus, acting as host, picked up the bread, said the blessing, broke the bread and started to share it with them. In this simple action it was as if they had been blind and now their sight was restored. They recognised their guest and host.

They were alone at table. The journey of discovery had led them to the banquet. The dawn of the meaning of resurrection broke in their hearts and they rose from the table. Night surrounded them but their hearts were on fire.

Quickly they were on their way to spread the good news. They returned to the group and were greeted with the news that Peter too had experienced Jesus risen. The travellers share their story of experiencing Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

In our earnest longing to build our discipleship on rock we turn, as Jesus taught us, to the scriptures. We journey with others who seek to make meaning from their life experiences. We gather with the community and in the breaking of the bread we see Christ.

Our vision carries us forth to be, and bring, Good News to all.

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