

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April EASTER 3

## Read Luke 24.13- 35

### Reflection

Our Gospel reading today is one of the best known and loved of all the resurrection appearances. It gave rise to “Abide With Me”, one of our best known hymns. Yet today especially, it surely has much to say. Downcast disciples, whose world has been turned upside down and hopes shattered trudging along – there will be many sharing those feelings at the moment. And there all of a sudden, out of nowhere, a stranger, well they certainly don’t recognise him.

A gentle beginning, he simply walks with them, what are you speaking of? He gets them to speak, to open up. ‘Don’t you know’, they seem to say – but he does not say ‘yes, of course I do’, he listens, lets them pour out their hearts, and in doing so, they are comforted – surely a lesson in walking with the troubled to all of us. Their hearts burning within them, they say so later, but perhaps so full of sadness and eyes downcast, not looking, they still can’t see who this is!

It wasn’t that they didn’t know that Jesus might have risen, for they told Jesus what the women had said, angels, empty tomb and all! It was in their heads, but not yet their hearts, so downcast that they could not get it - ever felt like that? Feel like it in these times perhaps?

What does Jesus do, he gives them the chance to go their own way – when they approach their destination, he walked on ahead as if he were going on.....but whilst they can’t recognise him, they are comforted. ....<sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” Why did they do that, here was someone who was walking alongside them, addressing their sorrow, connecting with something deep inside. When feeling loss, fear, uncertainty or sadness how easy it is just to wallow in it. But if we will but ask, Jesus will stay with us, and in the midst of our own circumstances, however late and dark it appears, we too must urge him to stay – for in his very presence is light, strength and comfort in the midst of any circumstance.

And then, the meal and eyes are opened as he broke the bread. Finally, what has been there all along becomes plain to them – yes this IS what Jesus does, not just the breaking of the bread, but the whole walk with him! Yes it must be him - how does the hymn put it “heavens morning breaks and earth’s vain shadows flee”. Jesus has illuminated their lives, and whilst the story says he then disappears physically, that light will not. He is alive and they know it now – and what do they do, they drop what they are doing and rush of to share that good news, to encourage others who have been as low and fearful as them.

In times like these, we might be tempted to have our eyes downcast too. After all the lockdown and lack of meeting together makes things look pretty bleak. But take heart from the walk to Emmaus and remember, it is in the midst of such a bleak time and walk that Jesus appeared to the disciples all those years ago, and through his Spirit, and the lives of those in whom he lives,, he will continue to do so.

Gracious Lord, we remember that you accompanied the two disciples as the darkness deepened for them and they journeyed to Emmaus. Accompany us, we pray, on our journey through our times. Guide us, strengthen us, make our hearts to burn within us and so open our eyes to your presence with us, this day and always. **Amen.**

### Revd Phil Cudmore (Curate)

