

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 3

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 2:14,22-33

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

On the day of Pentecost Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice: "Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impossible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him:

I saw the Lord before me always,
or with him at my right hand nothing can shake me.

So my heart was glad
and my tongue cried out with joy:
my body, too, will rest in the hope
that you will not abandon my soul to Hades
nor allow your holy one to experience
corruption.

You have made known the way of life to me,
you will fill me with gladness through your
presence.

"Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 15

Response:

Show us, Lord, the path of life.

or

Alleluia!

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you. I say to the Lord: "You are my God. O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup; it is you yourself who are my prize." (R.)
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel, who even at night directs my heart. I keep the Lord ever in my sight: since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. (R.)
3. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad; even my body shall rest in safety. For you will not leave my soul among the dead, nor let your beloved know decay. (R.)
4. You will show me the path of life, the fullness of joy in your presence, at your right hand happiness for ever. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 Peter 1:17-21

A reading from the first letter of St Peter.

If you are acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home. Remember, the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ; who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for your sake. Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for that very reason – so that you would have faith and hope in God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Luke 24:13-35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Two of the disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, "What matters are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, "You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days." "What things?" he asked. "All about Jesus of Nazareth" they answered "who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God

and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing."

Then he said to them, "You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ would suffer and so enter into his glory?" Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. "It is nearly evening" they said "and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at the table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?"

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, "Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus
in the breaking of the bread, alleluia.



The Emmaus story is one of the best-crafted in the Gospel tradition. Luke brings together many important themes: Jerusalem as the place where God's plan will be accomplished; the disciples' journey from bewilderment to faith; the fulfilment of scripture; the elements of the early preaching; the presence of Jesus today in the Eucharist.

The more important location in the story is Jerusalem: the Easter mystery is not yet completed, so the disciples are walking away from the place of salvation. They cannot make sense of the apparent disaster which has befallen them because they can only see one side of the story: they have the facts about Jesus, but cannot see how this could be part of God's plan as they do not understand the Hebrew scriptures. The risen Jesus explains the events against the background of the Law and the Prophets, not by individual texts but taking those writings as a whole. When they persuade him to stay with them, he breaks bread, which for Luke is the characteristic way of referring to the Eucharist; their eyes are opened, they recognise him but he vanishes. They return to Jerusalem where the final act of the Paschal mystery will unfold with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; they receive the official testimony to the resurrection: the Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon. ■

LEARN

In appearance stories in the Bible, it is always God or the risen Jesus who takes the initiative.

There is nothing in the original text which says that the person with Cleopas has to be another man: the two could be Cleopas and his wife or another female companion.

Cleopas and his companion relate to the disciples in Jerusalem how Jesus had made himself known to them in the breaking of bread.

SAY

Christ walks beside me on the road of life.

REFLECT

The last line in our Gospel extract today says, "Then they told their story ... how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread." This is not what the original text actually says: it reads how he had made himself known to them at the breaking of bread. In the Bible, God or the risen Jesus reveal themselves to people: individuals do not discover or come across God by accident.

Luke is answering a question common to any generation which did not experience the risen Jesus in the direct way in which his first disciples did: that is, those of us who have to believe without seeing. His answer is: in the Eucharist; this is the most important way in which the Lord makes himself present to his latter-day disciples. Our present liturgy reflects the Emmaus story as it presents the two ways in which Christ nourishes his followers, at the table of the word and of the sacrament. The celebrant is there representing Christ, not as the star of the show. The word is of equal importance to the sacrament, as it should deepen the disciples' appreciation of Jesus and his place in our lives. The presentation of the liturgy is therefore a responsibility on everyone involved: the person presiding should prepare a proper homily; readers should make sure that they communicate the word in a way that everyone can understand; those responsible for music should check that the hymns they select are relevant to the particular day. This is because the liturgy is not a performance: it is the most powerful way in which the risen Lord makes himself present to his disciples. ■

DO

Notice how the celebrant breaks the bread at the Eucharist. Make your "Amen" response to the Body of Christ a real act of faith in the presence of the risen Jesus in the Eucharist.

