

An act of Spiritual Communion

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Alleluia, Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Faithful one, whose word is life: come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the Kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We reflect on the day and on our relationships.

- *What good things have come from God today?*
- *Where have I fallen short?*
- *What will I try to do differently in future?*

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy

May the God of love and power
Forgive us and free us from our sins,
Heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit,
And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect (special prayer for today)

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

BIBLE READING

Luke 24:13-35 The Walk to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared

to Simon!’ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

REFLECTION

Here we meet two disciples in their disappointment, their fear and their confusion as they journey away from Jerusalem; their hopes and their despair in cataclysmic collision over the previous few days. They have turned their backs on the city, unable to fully comprehend what has happened; to make sense of it all. Imagine how they must have felt; that swirling maelstrom of emotions and feelings that accompanies the loss of a loved one – shock, numbness, sadness, anger, fear, guilt, and so many more.

Their full attention is focused on themselves, on how recent events will affect their own lives; they need to get away from Jerusalem; what is there left to stay for? Their minds are so full of the recent events that when a stranger comes alongside them, they take little notice of him. Even when he talks with them, explaining the scriptures, they don’t realise who he is. Only when they are at table together and he blesses and breaks bread do they see who the stranger really is.

It can all sound a bit far-fetched. After all, these are people who were obviously close to Jesus, so how come they don’t recognise him? They knew him well, and they know he died. They have heard the report of the women who found the empty tomb, but just haven’t taken it in; they don’t expect to see him, and certainly not walking with them.

And how often this sort of thing happens – when we fail to notice what is really obvious to others and in different circumstances even to ourselves. Last year at the Great Dorset Steam Fair, surrounded by thousands of visitors, I heard a voice saying, ‘It’s Sue. Yes, it is **Sue. SUE!!**’ I stood dumbstruck for a moment, unable to recognise two work colleagues. To meet someone in a location or situation far removed from where we normally encounter them will at the very least cause us to struggle for a moment to acknowledge that here is someone we know well.

Cleopas and his companion believed that Jesus was dead; they didn’t expect to see him; not there; not then. And yet it is to the two of them--the two he has come near to who still don’t understand--that Jesus eventually reveals himself. And he is with us, too; in places where we might not expect to find

him, and at times that we don't expect to see him. And the experience of the two travellers should give us hope. For when we don't remember or don't understand, Christ is poised to reveal himself to us as well. And he will come near as many times as needed, until we finally see and understand.

**Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,
'I am with you always'.**

Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.

**Hear our prayers for others and for ourselves,
and keep us in your care. Amen**

Prayers for this third Sunday of Easter, when we recall that Jesus himself came up and walked along with those two troubled disciples on the road to Emmaus. So, let us pray that he will walk with us in this, our time of trouble.

Walk with us, Lord, on our journey of faith, both as individuals and as the Church of God; open up the truths you long for us to understand, and inspire all who teach and encourage. Equip us all to pass on the good news of Easter.

Lord God: **abide with us.**

Walk with us, Lord, as we look out on the near- deserted streets of our villages; as we take our daily exercise; and as we dream of the planned holidays and get together that cannot be. Be with the essential workers as they travel to provide for others. Walk with them and give them courage as they face the dangers of catching Covid 19. Be with those who are struggling financially because they cannot work. At this time when people are searching for meaning in all this suffering, meet the curious, searching souls or those moving in the wrong direction. Let your presence be sought and recognised in the world.

Lord God: **abide with us.**

Walk with us, Lord, in our life journeys, guiding, teaching and correcting us, as we learn new ways of loving in our homes, our work and our communities. And walk with all those in authority who have such difficult decisions to make: guide them with your wisdom that they may always act rightly and justly for the common good.

Lord God: **abide with us.**

Walk with us, Lord, through the times of suffering and pain, alerting us to one another's needs and providing for us in whatever ways are best for us. Help us to trust you through the dark times; breathe new life and hope into those who are close to despair.

Lord God: **abide with us.**

Walk with us, Lord, through the valley of death; may our love and prayers support those who walk that journey today. When we cannot be close to our loved ones, we pray that you will draw close to them and welcome them into the joy of heaven.

Lord God: **abide with us.**

Lord, we thank you for all those who are doing all they can to help us get through this tough time. And we thank you for walking with us wherever we are. We thank you that you are indeed real and alive every step of the way.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

These prayers are adapted from Living Stones, prayers of intercession, written by Susan Sayers.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen**

We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

**Keep our hearts seeking, Lord,
so we do not miss you
when we pass through the shadows.**

**Keep our hearts seeking, Lord,
so we do not obscure
your many attempts to talk to us.**

**Keep our hearts seeking, Lord,
so we may recognise you
in the many forms of broken bread.**

**Keep our hearts seeking, Lord,
so we can walk the heaven on earth
for you are walking with us.**

We pray God's blessing on each other

**May the Lord bless us and keep us;
may the Lord make his face to shine upon us, and be gracious to us;
may the Lord turn his face toward us and grant us his peace. Amen**