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3rd Sunday of Easter - 23 April 2023

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23 April 2023

Third Sunday of Easter

Reflection by Fr. Peter Black

Introduction

On this third Sunday of the Easter season, we gather round the table of the Word and the table of the Eucharist. Through a quickened faith in the Lord's resurrection proclaimed in the Scriptures and made mystically present for us in the Eucharist, we too can come know him in a new way.

Penitential Act

Use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are the spotless Lamb. Lord have mercy.

You are our hope. Christ have mercy.

You are the bread of life. Lord have mercy.

Collect

The Oration

May your people exult for ever, O God,

in renewed youthfulness of spirit,

so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of our adoption,

we may look forward in confident hope

to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity

It is now the third week of Easter, and the collect maintains an exuberance and vigour where some waning in enthusiasm might be expected. It also presages a further dimension to resurrection faith. The vitality of the prayer is conveyed in the energy of the vocabulary: exultation, youthfulness of spirit, rejoicing. The cause for this lies in the renewal of spirit and the restoration of the relationship between humanity and the divine that has been achieved in the resurrection of Christ, and is currently being felt by the faithful. The effect on the believer is a confident hope in the future resurrection of the dead.

This turn towards the resurrection of all believers is a little unusual in Easter prayers, though perhaps welcome. It is a modern addition. The collect has been formed by

combining two ancient Roman prayers: the opening petition from an Easter mass set and the closing petition from a mass for the deceased. The reference to baptism as 'adoption' is a contemporary insertion used to join the two parts.

Acknowledgement

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Acts 2:14, 22-23

God's Providence was operative in the violent death of Jesus no less than in his resurrection, both of them foreseen and foretold by the prophets. Those directly or indirectly responsible for his death are summoned to repentance with the promise of divine forgiveness and a new life as followers of the Crucified and Risen One.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 15(16):1-2, 5, 7-11

Lord, you will show us the path of life. Or alleluia.

The psalm sings of faith and comfort in the love of God. This is what the followers of Christ learn through the appearances of the risen Lord.

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:17-21

John writes to stop people from sinning. But if they do sin, whether from human weakness or human malice, they nevertheless have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just One.

Gospel Reading

Luke 24:13-35

The disciples who returned from Emmaus have told the mistrustful disciples of their meeting with the risen Jesus. And now he appears in their midst to give them a similar experience, a first-rate lesson in scripture and what it says about his suffering and rising from the dead.

Reflection

When we have not seen a relative or friend for some time and they have not really changed physically we are at ease saying, 'well you have not changed at all.' In a similar vein however, when someone has aged and changed dramatically, perhaps due to illness, we will only say in private, with a feeling of regret, 'well you would not recognise them.'

It was not a matter of a long period of time, age or illness and suffering that hindered the disciples on the road to Emmaus from recognising Jesus. Jesus had been

radically transformed by his resurrection. Of course, many followers of Jesus had seen him in the flesh before his death on Calvary. After his death and resurrection, it seems that he was not easy to recognise. Remember Mary Magdalene in the garden while visiting the tomb of Christ, she thought he was the gardener until he called her by name. Remember the disciples who had been fishing and a stranger on the shore asked them if they had caught anything and then slowly they realised that it was the resurrected Lord. As for Thomas, he just did not believe that the crucified Jesus could be living and appeared to his fellow disciples. What about us? Do we find it difficult to recognise the risen Lord among us? What are the obstacles to recognition? What helps us to recognise Christ in our day?

In some ways it is harder for us. At least some of those early followers saw him after his resurrection even though they struggled with recognition. No wonder Jesus said to Thomas, 'blessed are those who have not seen me, but still believe.' The disciples on the road only came to realise that it was Christ after reflecting on the Scriptures. They had to be reminded of the meaning of the life, suffering and death of Christ, they had to discuss the radical transformation of their own lives that was brought about by the resurrection. All this was preparation for the event that would at last open their eyes and their hearts. Christ took bread at the table and blessed it and gave it to them to eat. The Scriptures and the Eucharist become two other companions on that famous journey.

We know that one of these two disciples was called Cleopas. How he poured his heart out to this mysterious stranger on the road. All his fears, questions, hopes and disappointments are recorded in the gospel of Luke. Granted he had his fellow disciple with him on the road to chat to, however he needed another presence to engage him. Perhaps we forget that we are on a journey of faith and not just walking routinely and sometimes aimlessly day after day, year after year. Perhaps we forget that it takes time in prayer, reflection on the Scriptures and participation in the Eucharist to be alert to the presence of Christ in daily events and even in times of drama. As people of faith, we are not walking alone. The gentle rebuke Christ gave to the two disciples might well be addressed to us. 'You foolish men and women, so slow to believe.'

We all want our hearts to burn again within us. If our faith has gone cold or become a little tepid, this gospel account of the journey to Emmaus should give us renewed hope. Christ can come to us in unexpected ways and at unusual times, just as he made himself known in a garden, at the lake shore and on the dusty road to Emmaus. For some of us we may secretly fear that it is too late to be transformed and to burn with faith, after all, the day is almost over and besides Christ at times seems to be leaving us, heading on. We can take to heart the quote of David that St. Peter delivers to the crowd:

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

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

As we continue to rejoice in the resurrection of Jesus the Christ, let us bring our needs to God in prayer.

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church as we move towards the next Synod. In this time of joy may they share their faith with all peoples in jubilant proclamation of the Good News.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for world leaders in the spheres of politics, health, education and economics. May they be guided by the principles of truth and justice in all their decisions.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all Christians that they will seek to follow more closely the example of Christ, the risen Lord.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who suffer hunger, thirst, loneliness, ill health, homelessness, hurt or injustice. May they be comforted by those who see the face of Christ hidden in their need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are gathered here that they will all take the Spirit of the risen Lord with them into the world and witness with joy and courage. May their hearts burn with the knowledge given through the scriptures.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who mourn. May they find comfort in the love and care of their companions on the journey.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

We offer these needs to God in faith that they will be answered through the power of the Spirit and in the name of the risen Lord, Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Third Sunday of Easter, Year A (23 April 2023)

Title	AOV1	AOV2	CWB	CWBII	GA
Adoro Te, Devote			617		388
All you nations			616	347	353
Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord	15			350	360
Alleluia! sing to Jesus	191		619	449	371
At the Lamb's high feast we sing				341	
Bread of life, hope of the world	164			459	199
Christ is alive, with joy we sing			639	353	365
Christ the Lord is ris'n again			646	354	
Easter Alleluia				348	358
Gift of finest wheat			685	651	191
Godhead here in hiding			696	162	
God with hidden majesty					388
God's blessing sends us forth			694		
Humbly we adore thee			709	507	
I know that my redeemer lives		134		145	
In the breaking of the bread	58				
Jesus lives. Jesus lives today		29		361	
Keep in mind	180		730	530	391
Lift up your hearts to the Lord				539	416
Now let us from this table rise			753	560	
Now the green blade rises		131	756	363	364
Priestly people			796	589	
Psalms 66: Let all the earth		152			44
The day of resurrection!				367	
This is the feast of victory				371	
This joyful Eastertide			845		
We remember	81				446
When we eat this bread	99				
Who are you who walk in sorrow				370	

Title	AOVNG	S&S1
Emmaus	41	
Path of life		54

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 15: *Lord, you will show us the path of life./Alleluia!*

	CWB	JOBA
Psalm 15	299	pg. 44

Music selections by Michael Mangan

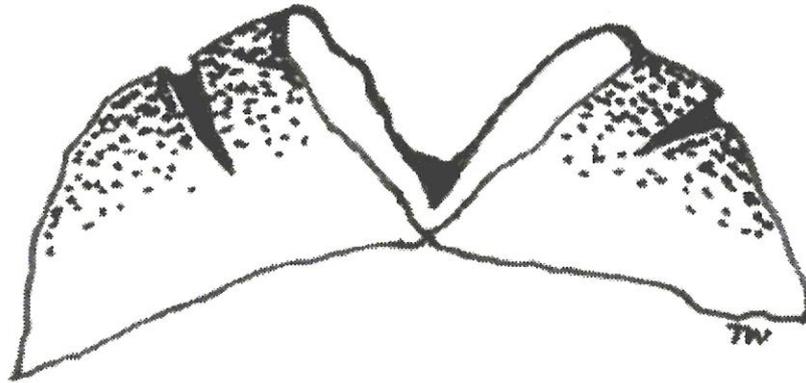
Sing out with joy (FWS) *Based on Ps 65/66* [Gathering, Recessional]

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

This is the day (FWS) *Based on Ps 117/118* [Gathering, Recessional]

Holy Spirit, come (TCS) [Gifts, Communion]

Hearts on fire (Vs 2 & 3) (SHOF) [Recessional]



They recognised Jesus
in the breaking of the
bread.