

Third Sunday of Easter

Homily

Today we're given the beautiful account of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. "Stay with us," the disciples urge their guest. And he does. And while he is at supper with them, he takes bread, blesses it, breaks it and gives it to them.

We are left in no doubt as to all what sort of meal this is, and who the real host of the meal is. At that exact moment, St. Luke tells us, the eyes of the disciples are opened!

The meal is very reminiscent of the Last Supper, but the Emmaus supper is no mere re-enactment of the Last Supper. It's a Resurrection meal hosted by the living, risen Christ, one that would be celebrated every Sunday from then on.

When the early Christians celebrated the Eucharist every Sunday they were not commemorating the tragic final days of a dead hero. They were gathering in the presence of the living risen Christ, to be fed by him, and given strength for the journey.

Word and Sacrament are found together on the road to Emmaus. The disciples testified to the fact that Christ had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread, and that their hearts had burned within them as Jesus talked with them on the road, opening the scriptures to them.

Word and Sacrament are the primary places, then and now, where the risen Christ is encountered by his people. Scripture and Eucharist then and now form the core of what the Church does and the centre of Christian living.

Our relationship with both Word and Sacrament matters. Is anything more important for the Church than the recovery of a **truly** sacramental life, a rediscovery of the joy and wonder of knowing Jesus Christ in the act of breaking bread together? Is anything more necessary than learning to read and hear and study the scriptures; to be prepared to listen to the Risen Christ teaching us – sometimes rebuking us for our foolish understanding – allowing him, trusting him to take us in new directions. And of feeling our hearts burning within us as he speaks?

The Easter Church is the Church on the road to Emmaus; because that is the road of our discovery that Jesus lives and walks with us.

Prayer of the Faithful

Let us offer up to the Lord all the needs of his Church and the world.

Let us pray for Pope Francis, the bishops and all Christian people: that a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit may give them power to announce the death and resurrection of Jesus with the bold conviction of St. Peter.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray that the Lamb, who has ransomed us from futile ways by his own blood, may raise up leaders of the nations with the wisdom and patience to work for peace.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for ourselves: that we too may recognise Jesus in the breaking of bread, and build up our brothers and sisters with the witness of our joy.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for those who have been sorely tried by suffering, pain and loss, particularly the sick and bereaved, and for those who are caring for them: that Jesus may join them on the road, making their hearts burn again with faith and love.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us pray for our faithful departed ones, especially for Maureen and Anthony White for whom we offer this Mass, for Vincenzo Terranova, Doreen Winstone and Barbara Mulhall whose funerals will take place this week, and for Fr Joe McGovern and Bishop Leo McCartie: that God will show them the path to life, and give them abounding joy in his presence for ever.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Let us now lift our hearts to the Lord in a moment of silent prayer.

Silence.

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.