

Dear Friends,

LUKE 24: 13-28

Some of the women disciples have shared the news that Jesus is alive. But their story is not believed. The community begins to fragment. Two of them begin a journey that takes them away from the rest. One of the two is called Cleopas. I'm imagining that the other is Mary and they are married to each other. Biblical scholars may not agree, but I'm sticking with it.

Mary and Cleopas are joined by a stranger. We are told that it's the risen Jesus. They are kept from recognising him. Their eyes need opening. Jesus the healer is good at opening eyes that are closed. But he takes his time. Healing cannot be rushed.

Mother Julian of Norwich called Jesus "Our courteous Lord". We see that courtesy here, in the care that Jesus takes of his friends. First, he listens to them. He encourages them to put into words their thoughts and feelings, their doubts and sadness. He asks them questions to help them find what they need to say.

After he has listened and they have opened up and told him the whole story, then Jesus is ready to talk. He does not hold back. His diagnosis is honest and hard to hear. He says, "Oh, how foolish you are, how slow of heart to believe..." We know already that their eyes are closed and need opening, we learn now that their hearts also need healing, they are slow, not open or receptive, they have become a little cold. Jesus the healer is good at opening eyes and at opening and warming hearts. He has begun their cure by listening to them. Now their healing continues as he talks and they listen. He breaks open the scriptures and shows how they reveal that it was necessary for him to suffer and then enter his glory. The risen Jesus sometimes comes to you in the stranger who walks alongside you. The risen Jesus sometimes comes to you in the scriptures as you read or listen to them.

Mary and Cleopas get to the end of the journey. It's almost evening and the day is nearly over. They are hungry to spend more time with Jesus. But he walks on as if he has further to go. Is this to be the parting of the ways? Or can they persuade him to stay?

God bless you,

Tony