

Dear Friends,

LUKE 24: 28-32

The risen Jesus has been walking with two of his friends, one named Cleopas and the other I'm calling Mary. To them, Jesus is a stranger. Their eyes are closed. They do not recognise him. They have come to the end of their journey. Jesus gives the impression that he is to continue travelling. Earlier we noticed the courtesy of Jesus. He listened first and then had his say. Here we see his courtesy again. Jesus does not force himself upon them. He waits for an invitation. It's the same Jesus who says, "Behold, I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me". In the Holman Hunt painting Light of the World, inspired by these words, there is no handle on Jesus' side of the door. You are free to choose whether to open or not.

Cleopas and Mary say, "Stay with us". Jesus does not impose his presence on them, but staying with them is what he wants. In John's gospel Jesus says, "Abide in me as I abide in you". "Abide" there and "Stay" here are the same Greek word.

Cleopas and Mary open the door and Jesus readily comes in to them and eats with them, and they with him. A simple meal is brought and Jesus the guest becomes the host. He takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it and gives it to them. This was exactly what he did a few days earlier at the last supper. It is a moment of healing. Their eyes are opened. They recognise him. The risen Jesus sometimes comes to you in the stranger; sometimes in the scriptures; and sometimes in the sacrament of the breaking of the bread.

But then, immediately he vanishes from their sight. You may not grasp Jesus. He is free to come and go. Maybe again it is his courtesy. You can only take in so much of Jesus, the full vision would overwhelm you. So, you are given glimpses and whispers, enough to keep you travelling for another day. Perhaps it will always be like that. It has been said that you are on a never-ending ascension into God. Now you know only in part, then you will see face to face. But perhaps even then, that will be an unfolding vision. You will still be learning to see more clearly, day by day.

Jesus has broken open the bread, it reminds them of earlier when he broke open the scriptures. Then, their hearts burned within them. Their eyes have been opened, their hearts which were a little cold and slow have been warmed and quickened. Jesus is healing them. He is however working not just to heal individuals, but to heal relationships. The community has been fragmenting, they have started to scatter. They need to be gathered together.

God bless you,

Tony