

Dear Friends,

LUKE 24: 33-35

Cleopas and another disciple who I'm calling Mary have been walking away from the community of the friends of Jesus. At supper, a stranger has broken bread with them. Their eyes have been opened as they have realised that their companion is Jesus. But the moment of revelation is also the one in which Jesus has vanished from their sight.

They rise up. "Rise up" is a word which is sometimes used for the resurrection. They are being raised to new life. They rise up and immediately go back the way they came. They find the rest of the friends "Gathered together".

At the moment we are being kept apart. In these circumstances I really notice the destination of this story. Part of the work of Jesus is to gather people together; to unite us and make us one. In our present circumstances we are continuing to stay apart for our own safety and to protect the NHS so that they can give their excellent care to those who are suffering. But in a time of staying apart it's also important to value the ways in which we may still gather together, such as through our telephone calls. Some churches are having services, social get-togethers and meetings through their computers and telephones. Let me know if you would like to do more of that.

We also recognise that our country and world are going to need to gather together to meet what is going to be a tough future. At the moment there are some who are particularly vulnerable who are carrying the heaviest load and suffering the most. Examples of this are, those experiencing domestic abuse; the 25% of UK families who have less than £100 in savings; those world-wide who will, by the time the pandemic is over be living in poverty, according to Oxfam this could be half the world's population. We are really going to need to catch the vision of the road to Emmaus and gather together in partnership to get through this as one world.

And our two have to imitate the courtesy they found in Jesus. They have a story to tell. But they are not the only ones. First, they listen and hear how Jesus is risen and has appeared to Simon. Then, they have their say and tell of what happened on the road and of how Jesus was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

God bless you,

Tony