



Sunday 26th April 2020

Third Sunday of Easter

**The Beacon Parishes Mission Community of Ipplepen with Torbryan,
Denbury, Broadhempston and Woodland**

First Reading

Acts 2.14a, 36-41

Peter Addresses the Crowd

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

The First Converts

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Second Reading

Luke 24.13-35

The Walk to Emmaus

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

A Reflection by Fr Tony Meek

In our Gospel reading today we learn that Cleopas and his companion, disciples of Jesus, failed to recognise the risen Christ when he appeared alongside them on the road to Emmaus. Mary Magdalene had failed similarly to recognise him by the empty tomb. In these most difficult times, many people - perhaps many of us - are asking where our loving God is in this pandemic.

The other day I was deeply moved by a picture which a friend had shared on Facebook. It is "Good Friday 2020" by Polish Jesuit Vyacheslav Okun, who is a professor of philosophy at the Jesuit Ignatian University in Krakow and also at the Vatican. It shows the crucified Christ in the hands and arms of a current Intensive Care team in their PPE.



Where is our God in all of this? In Christ he is with us, suffering with the patients, working with the medical teams. I recalled a sermon I preached around the 50th anniversary of the 1966 Aberfan tragedy. A negligently created slurry tip had cascaded down a Welsh mountainside into a village school, killing 116 children and 28 adults in their classrooms. Many had asked angrily how God could have let this happen. The answer of course was that God was not at the top of the mountain pushing the slurry down into the school. In Christ he was choking and dying with them in the classrooms. In Christ he was with the teams of people frantically digging with their bare hands.

In Christ, God is with us now and will remain alongside us through these trying times. We all look forward to being able once more to join with him, like those two disciples, in the breaking of the bread.

Fr Tony Meek