

Our Sunday Reflections

April 19th 2026

Easter 3

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive
God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess
to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive
us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his
kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord. **Amen.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on
fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalm - Psalm 116.1-3 and 10-17 *We say the psalm aloud*

1 I love the Lord, for he has heard the voice of my supplication;
because he inclined his ear to me on the day I called to him.
The snares of death encompassed me; the pains of hell took hold of me; by grief and sorrow was I held.
Then I called upon the name of the Lord: 'O Lord, I beg you, deliver my soul.'

10 How shall I repay the Lord for all the benefits he has given to me?
I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.
I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants.
O Lord, I am your servant, your servant, the child of your handmaid; you have freed me from my bonds.
I will offer to you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call upon the name of the Lord.
I will fulfil my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord,
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son; and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Acts 2.14a and 36-41

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them:

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

³⁷ 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?' ³⁸ 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. ³⁹ 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.' ⁴⁰ And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' ⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added.

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel Luke 24.13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ 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?' ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ 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. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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.' ²⁵ Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² 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?' ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' ³⁵ 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 for the day

If there is one thing I have learnt over the years it is that being a Christian is not about the label, it is not something you inherit from your parents, or something you declare on a census because, well what else do you say. I have learnt that being a Christian is a journey of leaning – it is about discipleship and about being changed each and every day to live like the 'master', like Jesus – in the full stature of humanity!

Matthew, in his gospel ending very much underscores this when he declares the church's call is to go and make disciples, teaching them to follow all Jesus has shown about living in the love, peace and justice of God the Father. Luke ends his gospel with an illustrative story of discipleship.

It is three days since the resurrection and it would seem all Jerusalem is filled with rumours and accounts of this crucified Jesus come back from the grave. Two disciples, Cleopas, and the other disciple (was this his wife!) are on the road home to Emmaus – a seven mile walk! Alongside them draws a man who it seems is eavesdropping on the conversation they are having; although it might be better titled an energised discussion; we have all had one or more of those. He politely asks what they are talking so energetically about. 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' 'What things?' Jesus replies. And so the discussion begins that will take the remainder of the 7 miles home.

There are a couple of words used here that may be worth noting. 'Stranger' does not do justice to what Cleopas says. A 'stranger' in our thinking is someone we do not know; however, Cleopas really sees Jesus as a 'foreigner living amongst the people'; a bit like a 'resident alien'.

The second word is one Jesus uses for Cleopas and the other disciple which is unhelpfully translated as 'foolish'. For most of us this word will conjure up someone who has taken an unwise decision and is now facing the consequences. A better word for what Jesus says would be, 'dullard', which may have other thoughts racing through your mind. Cleopas has not taken an unwise decision but clearly has a lack of comprehension of the events that unfolded in Jerusalem in the recent days, despite having been there. This is beautiful moment, Cleopas calls into question Jesus not knowing what has occurred in the city. Jesus' reply, rather than shut the conversation down or create an argument, instead opens wide the possibility to join with the two and discuss all completely.

And here are why the words used matter so much. For words can open or close the doors of conversation and learning.

Being a bit 'dull' on a matter should not result in doors being closed, be that by others or even by ourselves (it can be so much more comfortable to remain safe at home with our ignorance). I saw a sign recently on a math teacher's wall which read 'making a mistake shows you are learning'. Having questions in matters of faith, rather than a barrier, is an opportunity to 'fill in the gaps', come to understand more of the ways of God in Jesus, to talk and let him explain matters to us. It is risky, you might feel a fool, yet we see Jesus will never reject or belittle us. It may take some time, but we have a lifetime in which to walk with him, to come and ask him about the things we don't understand, to let him reframe our understanding and help us to capture the full picture.

There really are no silly questions, for most of us, the question we might have has been asked before. And do not worry what others might think of you – I suspect that is often the real block we have in our discipleship. Jesus shows his grace on the Emmaus road, no question is silly or daft, and he loves to heal his disciples in learning more of life and faith in him.

Now you may not be a walking conversationalist, fear not Jesus also does quiet dinners. As much as he feeds the hungry minds of Cleopas and the 'other disciple' with scripture he also enables revelation through action and drama at the dinner table.

Now, we would be unwise to think the table at the end of the Emmaus road is a 'Eucharistic' moment, it is

very different from any of the other mentions of a meal akin to the 'Lord's Supper'. Notably, there is no cup mentioned, and Jesus does not speak the words of institution at the table. Instead, Luke simply tells us that he blesses the bread and breaks it. Yet in that moment there is an explosive revelation, now they get it, all makes sense!

Whether in the walking alongside on the road or in sitting down to eat Jesus reveals to all he is not standing apart from us, as if untouchable. Luke's story reminds us that our relationship with the resurrected Christ is a relationship of long walks, risky conversations, reframed understanding, and quiet dinners — an intimate relationship between Christ and the church, of words shared and bread broken.

The opportunity is ever there; here's a question 'are we open to this' and ready to give time to it?

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

As we continue this season of Easter let us pray for that our faith will grow and develop.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Strengthen and guide Bishops Michael and Fiona, all laity and clergy who seek to serve you in this diocese.
May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We Pray for Our King, the Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us in compassion and to a just world.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill and risk their lives to care for them.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen.