



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Easter 3 2020 11 am

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Alleluia!

In addition to the twelve named Apostles, Jesus appears to have been followed around Galilee and Judaea by many other men and women.

Some of their names, like Mary Magdalene, we know, but there were many others too, whose names were never recorded.

In this morning's gospel reading from St. Luke, we meet two disciples walking disconsolately back to their village of Emmaus after the dreadful events of Holy Week. One of two companions, Cleopas is named, but the other remains anonymous.

The two disciples, despite garbled tales of an empty tomb, are understandably disheartened and downcast: Jesus the Messiah, the wonder-working Galilean, had, after all, despite all of the

promise, the signs and the miracles, just like all the rest, turned out to be a dud, just another charlatan, another fraud.

So, it is, that, after the arrest in Gethsemane, the crucifixion on Calvary and the long silence of Good Friday and the Sabbath, they now trudge the 7 or so unbearably sad and heavy miles back to their village homes and, as often happened, for safety's sake, the pair are joined by another traveller.

At first, they think it is just another weary, foot-sore journeyer like them, heading home from celebrating Passover in Jerusalem.

From the outset, it is clear that this man is someone who knows his scriptures, but he is not someone they recognise.

Slowly and patiently, as they journey together, the mysterious traveller gradually reveals the Resurrection to them: first, he shows how the promised Messiah was destined suffer, to die and to rise again and, as they are fed with the precious words of scripture, Cleopas and his companion begin to develop new insights, fresh understandings about the nature of the Christ and why it was that he had to die.

But still, they have have no inkling about who their companion might be.

Only when the stranger is pressed to stay the night with them and he takes bread, blesses it and breaks it for sharing, do the

scales fall from their eyes and then, instantly, they know that the stranger is Jesus.

Ever since that encounter with Jesus, Christians have been meeting him in fellowship along the road; in the opening of the scriptures, and in the breaking of bread.

Fellowship, Word and Sacrament, three cornerstones of Christian faith and growth. All too sadly, in these Covid-19 shaped days, fellowship and the sacraments, not least the breaking of bread, are denied us.

Our celebration of the Eucharist, week by week, even day by day, have in more normal times, provided us, as it provided Cleopas and his companions, the chance to meet Jesus face-to-face in the form of bread and wine.

Fed at the Table of God's Word and nourished at the Table of the Sacrament; in Christian fellowship, we have met to share our stories with each other and with Jesus and to know him better.

No wonder that the Eucharist has been described as nothing less than the "source and summit of our lives" ⁱ.

Watching the Eucharist online, might help us make our Spiritual Communion, but nothing can make up for the fact that it is the Eucharist which where the Church is 'made'; where we are 'remade': remade in the image and likeness of God; the place where we meet Jesus in bread and wine, and

from which, we go out to live Eucharistic lives, lives full of praise and thanksgiving, each one of us the very body and blood of Jesus.

The challenge of these strange and troubling days is how we can continue to live the Eucharist; to be the Eucharist; to be Christ's body and blood in our homes, in our places of work if we still have them; how we can remain faithful to the apostles teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and in prayer.

What does it mean now, for us, the fellowship which has for 900 years or more called St. Marylebone, home to be a Eucharistic community?

What being the true and living body and blood of Jesus means? What living the Resurrection means? For more than ever, the world needs to feel and see that Jesus is alive and that we live in him.

On the road to Emmaus, the disciples were strengthened through the Word which Jesus explained to them; heartened by their companionable fellowship with him and they recognized him as their Risen Saviour in the "breaking of the bread".

May Jesus still come to us, encourage us, sustain us and empower us and may we be as eager as Cleopas and the other disciple in telling others that Christ is risen.

Alleluia!

ⁱ Dogmatic Constitution of the Catholic Church