

Reflection on Luke 24:35-48
Third Sunday of Easter Year B -19th April, 2015

When we experience the *Christ* alive in our world, our lives and hearts will change. When we *hear* the *Christ* say to us: *Have you anything here to eat?* our world will change. When we can *touch* the *hands and feet* of *Jesus the Christ* our *joy will be great and we will hardly be able to believe it and we will stand dumbfounded.....* As we too *tell our story* of how we *recognised Jesus* in our own journey, then we too will experience the mystery of the *peace* this encounter offers us and our world. Are we *witnesses to all of this?*

Jesus in today's Gospel also asks the disciples, and us, these most important questions: *Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts?* We live in times when the so called news is thrust upon us continually throughout our day. Something happens anywhere in the world and we can know about it almost instantly. If we listen to any of the hourly news bulletins we are confronted with a barrage of bad news in one form or another. Listen to any news bulletin and note the content of *good news* – there seems to be very little of it around. What does all this *bad news* on its own do to our psyches and the whole of our being?

The disciples of Jesus were also confronted with much *bad news*. Their country was occupied by a foreign power - their eyes were opened to the corruption of their own religious system - and they had just seen the one they had placed all their hopes on crucified as a criminal. But Jesus comes among them and asks them why they are so *agitated* and *why do they doubt*. We today could come back at Jesus and say: *What, are you blind? Can't you see this crazy world we are living in and all the shocking things that are happening?* And we might even go one step further and say to Jesus: *And what are you doing about it?* But the disciples never asked any such questions even in their confused state. There was an openness within them to listen more deeply. **Slowly** they awakened to the **Christ in all things**. And this happened because they *knew* Jesus before they *knew* Jesus the Christ. Without Jesus they would never have recognised Jesus as the Christ – the Cosmic Christ.

It is so important for us to firstly come to know Jesus personally. Scripture is one of the primary places where we meet Jesus. When we begin to see the scriptures as not just a story written hundreds of years ago for us to reverence in some abstract or remote way, but a story that reveals to us our own story, our own lived experience, our own encounter of the living Jesus in our daily lives, then it will be through all of this that we begin to meet Jesus personally. This deeply personal experience is necessary if we are to truly understand who Jesus is for us and to then open into the revelation of Jesus as the Christ of the world.

The remarkable *joy that leaves us feeling dumbfounded* with all of this is that this whole experience expands our hearts and minds so that we *see* the Christ present in all religions of the world, in all peoples of the world and in the whole of creation – here we experience a glimpse of the Wholeness of Creation. If there is any hint of exclusion, division, separation, oppression etc then we can be sure we do not yet *know Jesus the Christ*. There is a suffering though that comes when we experience the brokenness of this Wholeness, but at the same time we will know the *joy* of what is before us. This experience gives us a new heart with which to see and experience the world. In this place we will not judge God for God's seeming inaction or for *allowing* such brokenness to occur - but we will hear Jesus saying to **us**: *Have you anything here to eat?* Our hunger for the Wholeness we now know our world to be, is what will feed the *Body of Christ*. This Wholeness is the *good news* we *hunger* for and once we begin to believe and experience it we will begin to see its reality everywhere.

The temptation though is that we can become downtrodden by the *bad news* and lose sight of the Wholeness we are. It is a Grace given to us to hold that tension of the suffering of the world but at the same time to know there is Wholeness through and beyond the suffering. Sometimes it is learning to adjust our focus and learning to delight in the simplest of everyday things and events. By this I don't mean to distract ourselves from the suffering but to hold this very real tension in balance. If we try and ignore or numb out the suffering of our world then we are not *feeding the Body of Christ*. We can tend to run from suffering but to *feed the Body of Christ* means walking into it knowing there is the presence of a deeper Truth. How hard this is for us and how we want to run, but we must resist. That is why, like the disciples, we must keep telling our *story* within our communities so that the vision and dream is kept alive within and for all of us. The moment we cease telling our *story* the suffering will overcome us and the *Body of Christ* will experience great famine.

In the week ahead can we take the time to notice and re focus on the goodness around us and within us? Perhaps we could start a *good news* journal where we name the acts of Love, goodness, compassion and justice we see around us on a daily basis and tell those stories of what we notice to each other and our communities? The Gospel Acclamation today prays: *“Lord Jesus, make your word plain to us, make our hearts burn with love when you speak.”* Where and when is this *word of Jesus* speaking to us today? Who in this *Body of Christ* is asking me today: *have you anything here to eat?* Are we open *witnesses* to the *story* of who we truly are – to the *story* of our Wholeness?
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