

Reflection 26th April 2020 Luke 24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus by Megan Cambridge

Throughout His ministry Jesus doesn't avoid connecting with people who are in the middle of sadness and grief and trouble in their lives. Jesus himself endured sorrow, grief, frustration and anger and knows what these things do to us. He knows what we are going through.

In our reading from the Gospel we see a stranger (Jesus) walking with two disciples on the road to Emmaus the evening of Easter Day. They have bet on the wrong Saviour and are now headed back to the old routine. Jesus listens as they tell him everything that happened over the weekend. They couldn't see past the gloom and sadness and grief and dying that had happened the past days to recognise that Jesus was actually right there beside them. It's a 7 mile journey - plenty of time to dwell on the hopelessness and helplessness that the disciples then (and now) know so well.

In these weeks post Easter, we hear how Jesus comes to his disciples and his other friends. Some are filled with grief, others with fear, some don't know what to think anymore, others don't understand what has happened and have no idea how the future will pan out. Jesus talks with them, or sits down and has a meal with them, and today he walks with them.

It is such a poignant image this image of Jesus walking with his disciples in the sadness and gloom. Even though they didn't realise it was Jesus he continued to walk beside them, listening to their pain, their disappointment and their grief. Even a stranger can give comfort to someone in grief. (How many times in recent weeks will it have been a stranger in the hospital that will have offered comfort to those struggling with Covid-19?)

They feel the love of this man walking with them, describing it later as "burning like fire" as Jesus shows them hope and reassurance through the words of Scriptures.

This story is about the meaning of Easter for us and could just as easily be our story as Jesus walks with us in whatever it is that troubles us. It will be the story of many people anxious about the pandemic, fearful for loved ones and feeling powerless to do anything to help them so far away or be near them to hold their hand. It's good to know his love and be comforted by the knowledge that everything is in his hands even though from our perspective everything may have gone 'pear-shaped'.

Suddenly this 2,000-year-old story is brought into the present. When we are mired in disappointment, defeat, depression, and despair Jesus is the unseen "stranger" walking alongside us, listening to us and, if we are willing to hear his voice, revealing himself to us.

Christ has risen from the dead! We are not walking alone, the unseen "stranger", the risen Jesus, is walking with us. The Emmaus road experience didn't just happen once a long time ago; it happens again and again.

