

Weekly Sermon

Third Sunday of Easter – 26th April 2020

Luke 24:13-35

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

All the post resurrection appearances are important in the Christian faith. The road to Emmaus stands among the most important of all, as is it possible to be with someone who you know but not recognise.

A couple of months ago I was visiting a Retirement Village Hostel and as I got into the lift with an elderly man we became involved in idle chatter. He told me that he was going to see a lady who had been an Air Hostess when he was a commercial pilot. Out of interest, I asked him which airline he was flying for, and he said that he had flown for ANA. I asked him if he knew people like Percy Trezise and he said that he knew him very well. I also asked him if he knew John Duffy and I got the same reply. By now the lift had reached the second floor and as we got out I said, 'I don't suppose you knew Ted Elliot?' He turned to me and said 'I am Ted Elliot'. I looked at him properly for the first time and realised that I did know him, even though we had spent some moments together before I recognised him.

It is possible to be with people who you know but also don't immediately recognise. In my life I have met many people who have helped me along the way. I've been extremely grateful to those people and one could go so far as to say there are a lot of those people who have acted like Jesus towards me.

The message this particular story is teaching is that Jesus is trying to help us to understand that we have to see Him in other people and act in a similar way. To see Jesus in others. If we look at 1Corinthians 9, we find the comment from Paul that we must be all things to all people. Paul makes this clear in order to emphasise to us that as we go about our Christian way, we have a responsibility to the people we meet. Being Jesus to them.

As we live through this coronavirus, we are learning all the time from people we come across in our daily life. It is not an easy thing to always love some of the people we meet. Some of them we probably won't like very much. Some will be harder to love than others and some will not always be the type of people who we would normally associate with. This is particularly challenging, and we have to work hard on ourselves all the time, in order that we might even begin to fulfill this obligation. When we try, we will be reminded of the text that tells us that 'all things work together for good for those who love God'. I don't find this easy to do. I try to be aware of it, but mostly I fall short. This is a continuing frustration for me in my work. All of us will like and love some people easier than others, but all this aside, we will still find the task extremely hard. We are called to walk beside people, all the people, not just the ones we find most attractive or easy to talk with. Quite often the difficult people are the ones who need us the most. We have to remember that, as we walk beside them we have to try to be Jesus to them. As we are all aware, this does not mean that we must fulfill all their requirements, some of these requirements will not always be appropriate.

Being a Christian person is not easy and Jesus appreciates just how difficult it can be. He lived and worked beside humanity and in all things, he understands totally what we go through. This story of the road to a Emmaus is vital in his teaching, that we are to care for one another as Jesus cares for us.

As we live through this virus, we will find out more and more about ourselves and our friends. Apart from all the negatives, it is also a very positive learning experience. We start to think more deeply about the things Jesus said, and consider ourselves in the life he expects of us. We will have moments of understanding, and like the road to Emmaus, we will meet people who we know, or perhaps even don't know, and come to understand that they need our help.

May God be with you all at this time and we must always be on watch for people who could be Jesus confronting us, and to whom we should be Jesus, as we live our lives. Amen