

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH
HOMILY FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER (A)

8th MAY 2011

In our Easter Gospels we hear about Jesus as he is now, risen from the dead, and we hear about his interaction with his first disciples.

The two disciples in today's gospel from St. Luke were not members of the Twelve. They were ordinary people. They could be two of us. They were trying to adjust to radical change in their lives just like most of us. They were thinking about Jesus, trying to make sense of what had happened.

As St. Luke tells us, their faces were downcast.

They were depressed because they had placed all their faith and hope in Jesus. He had given them their identity. They were his disciples. Now they felt abandoned.

He had given them direction and purpose in life. Now he had gone, crucified and they had no knowledge of his resurrection. They felt aimless and confused.

Now notice how the risen Jesus does three things to help them.

First: He came up quietly and walked by their side and spoke to them. They did not recognise that it was Jesus until later but they listened.

This was the same Jesus to whom we pray now.

When we feel isolated and abandoned he comes up and walks beside us.

He may come in the form of another person or he may come in the form of a spiritual awareness as we think about him and pray.

Second: He went through the Scriptures with them and showed them that his crucifixion was part of God's purpose. Their lives still had point and purpose because God had raised Jesus to new life.

Third: Jesus gave them evidence that they were not imagining all this. He enabled the two disciples to see him clearly and unmistakably as he broke bread with them, repeating his action at the Last Supper. This was a sign to them that he has truly risen and is really present with his people. The same happens for us at every Mass.

The disciples wanted him to stay with them but once they had understood his resurrection Jesus vanished from their sight. The risen Jesus does not allow his disciples to hold on to him

in any one place or form. He is not at home in this world. His home is with his Father in the life after death, and that is our home too.

St. Peter says this in the second reading, "You are living away from home."

Life is a journey towards and through death to our permanent home in heaven. We are travellers. We must expect changes in life; the scenery changes on a journey. If we stop short of home and try to settle somewhere else we will be disappointed. We cannot rest until we have reached our destination. There's no point in trying to settle down in a service station on the way.

Each home in which we live, each church in which we pray is a service station, a resting-place. It is not home.

Let's pray that we can see where we are going on our journey.

Let's be prepared to move.

Let's remember that Jesus is walking with us.

He shows us the way in the Scriptures and shows us himself in the breaking of bread.

Rev Geoff Carey