

“CHANGING MINDS....CHANGING HEARTS”

Easter to Pentecost, 2019

Small Group Gathering for Week No 6

Gospel: 7th Sunday of Easter; Luke 24: 46-53

Gather:

A candle is lit to signal the start of our gathering. The moving light of the candle is a sign of the living Christ, the Light of the World, with us.

A short time of silence.

Prayer:

*We come before you, Holy Spirit,
conscious of our sinfulness, but aware that we gather in your name.
Come to us, remain with us, and enlighten our hearts.
Give us light and strength to know your will,
to make it our own, and to live it in our lives.
Guide us by your wisdom, support us by your power,
for you are God, sharing the glory of Father and Son.
Amen*



Part of Opening Prayer used at every session of the Second Vatican Council, 1962-65

My Present Life:

Think of your life at present. Spend at least five minutes in silence thinking about the following questions.

What are the sources of joy in your day-to-day life?

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

What are the differences, if any, between pleasure, happiness and joy?

A Faith Angle:

Last Sunday, the Church throughout the world encountered Christ in the following part of the Gospel. Take your time to read it through slowly in silence or listen as a member of your group reads it aloud.

Luke 24:46-53

⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so, stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”

⁵⁰ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; ⁵³ and they were continually in the temple blessing God.

(Bible Gateway, New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24&version=NABRE> , retrieved 12/03/2019)

Some Other Thoughts:

This is the only gospel extract in our “Easter to Pentecost” program that is not from John’s gospel. John doesn’t mention the Ascension at all. Neither does Matthew and it occurs in Mark only as part of a later addition to his original text.

But Luke tells the story twice. As well as the Gospel account here, we also find it at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles (1, 6-11). There is little doubt that the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are Parts 1 and 2 of the story of the beginnings of the Church, written by the same author.

The idea of journeying dominates both works. In the Gospel, Jesus journeys steadfastly, single-mindedly to Jerusalem where he accomplishes a new Passover. The beginning of that journey is signalled by the Transfiguration (Luke, 9, 28-36). At the Transfiguration Jesus appears in the company of Moses and Elijah, both leaders of God’s people for whom journeying was an essential part of their missions. Both these great prophets of Israel had passed on their spirits to their followers; Moses to Joshua (Deuteronomy 34: 9) and Elijah to Elisha (2 Kings 2: 9-15). Jesus the greatest prophet will do the same for his followers with his Spirit.



Acts is the story of how Jesus' followers begin the process of taking his message from Jerusalem first to Judea and Samaria and then to the wider world. The character and work of Paul dominates much of the book and Luke appears in the story as a sometime companion of Paul's.

The Ascension is a kind of passage-way between the two parts of Luke's writings. Jesus, the "hero" of Part 1 returns to glory. But that's not the end of his work. His followers, empowered by his Spirit, carry on Jesus' work.

Sharing:

If you wish, only if you wish, share one or two (no more than two) of your thoughts or insights about the passage. Please speak for no more than twenty seconds at a time. This sharing is not a time for comparing the values of people's comments; it is certainly not a time for debate.



Go back to the gospel reading for another period of silent engagement.

My Future Life:

Turning to the future, and in the light of your prayerful reflection and discussion, spend at least five minutes considering the following questions.

What is an action/project in your private or public life have you felt called to undertake but have not started, thinking you didn't have the skill/strength/power to do it?

What steps can you take, aided by the Holy Spirit, to make a start?

Go:

This has been a special time. It will have been worthwhile if it leads us to live, even in a little way, as better people. We ask God's blessing on us.

Let us pray....

(This prayer to the Holy Spirit will be familiar to many Catholics).

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.*

*Lord,
by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit
help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

