

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, today our hearts are with those fleeing their homes in desperate search of safety and the possibility of a better life. Remove from our hearts, Lord, the suspicions, prejudices and fears that separate us from these strangers in our midst. Help us to respond to their needs as a community of generosity and love, seeing your face in all those most in need around us. We ask this, Lord, in your name. Amen.

Scripture Reading – The Road to Emmaus

Luke 24:13-35, *Consider have a different person read each color to break up and enliven the text.*

Black – narration

Red – travelers

Blue – Jesus

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them,

“What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, responded,

“Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

“What things?”

“About Jesus of Nazareth, he was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.

In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of

angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

“How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly,

“Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.”

So Jesus went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other,

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying,

“It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.”

Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

(Pause for silence)

- What word or phrase stands out for you in this passage?
- What images or moment most move you?

Reflection

We are asked, on this World Day of Migrants and Refugees, to place ourselves within the story of the Road to Emmaus. First, imagine yourself as one of the two disciples on the road. Jesus, who you have followed, loved and believed in is dead at the hands of

religious and political leaders. His body, which was buried, is now missing and great uncertainty and fear grip the community that came to believe in the words of this teacher from Nazareth.

- For what reasons might the two disciples be leaving Jerusalem for another village? How do these motives relate to the realities faced by migrants and refugees?

Now, skip to the end of the story. The disciples, having encountered the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread, return to their community of faith in Jerusalem. This community, through Simon, has also encountered the Risen Lord. They receive the travelers and share their experiences of encounter.

- How does our local faith community respond to the arrival of travelers, visitors, migrants and refugees? How are the travelers and the community both strengthened by the experience?

Finally, move to the middle of the passage. The disciples and the stranger (Jesus) approach the village, but the stranger gave the impression that he was going on further. The disciples insist that he spend the night with them and invite him to “stay with us.” It is only after they invite him in that their eyes are opened, and they realize that their hearts were burning with the joy and fullness of life that only Christ offers to each of us.

- In what ways have you encountered Christ’s love and/or joy through a stranger?
- How does this passage challenge you on this World Day of Migrants and Refugees?

Closing Prayer

Let us take a moment and offer our own prayers and petitions to our God this day. For whom and for what shall we pray?

Lord God, we offer all these prayers to you. As we pray for all migrants and refugees, we are reminded that your Son, as a baby, was also a refugee in Egypt. We pray for the intercession of St. Joseph and of Mary, the Mother of God who endured this exile with Jesus, and we conclude our prayer by praying the words that your Son gave us.

Our Father...

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