

**Easter 2 2019**  
**Homily at Matins**

Our second lesson this morning was the account of Jesus meeting the two disciples on the road, and then their description to Jesus - whom they don't yet recognise – of what had happened in the last few days. And then Jesus says to them ***“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”***

For Luke, not only was Jesus in the long line of the prophets, but his death and resurrection were a ***fulfilment*** of prophecy. It was inevitable: it ***“should”*** have happened. In Christian tradition one place in which this is seen to have been foretold is in the prophecy of Isaiah, not least in that reading from Isaiah that we also heard earlier: ***“He was despised and rejected by others”***

In his Gospel, Luke is shaping the character of his community and the event he describes here is a gift to him in that process.

Jesus draws out their story. He gives them time and space to tell him about how the bottom had fallen out of their world and how Jesus had not fulfilled their expectations. Then he gives them what amounts to a detailed scripture lesson. He takes them right back to those scriptures that they know so well and reminds them of the necessity of Jesus' suffering.

Then they ask Jesus to stay for a meal, and they recognise him in the breaking of the bread.

So how then is Luke trying to shape the ministry of the Church in this episode and indeed, how can the episode shape us? Well, if you think about it, Jesus attends to the men on the road, he engages with them, he gives them that quality time and space. And then he then energises them. He gives them the motivation to be witnesses to his message.

Isn't that what our calling is too? Isn't that what we should all be doing in our Christian lives: attending to people, engaging with them and giving them quality time, showing an interest in them and not just ourselves.... and then, through our own life and faith...re-energising them, motivating them?

Surely this is a powerful message for leaders in Northern Ireland today. It is not easy: but surely we have recently had the "quote of the year" from the Roman Catholic priest at the journalist's funeral: "*Why is the name of God does it take a death....?*"

In the very structure of Luke's narrative, we see the way in which God deals with his people and the way he invites us to deal with each other too.

And here, we also have a pattern for the Church's *worship* as well.

If you think about it, four fundamental parts of our services – and especially the Eucharist *are*: The Gathering or Preparation, The Liturgy of the Word, then, in the case of the Eucharist – the breaking of bread and the Sending out – the Dismissal – at the end. Remarkably, this story from Luke's Gospel also resonates with this shape of the liturgy.

The disciples were on the road to Emmaus and were joined by Jesus. They expressed their hopes, which they thought had been shattered...their sorrow and their regret about what had happened. This gathering of the disciples with Jesus on the road is rather like the gathering, penitence and praise at the beginning of the Anglican liturgy.

Then, we listen to scripture: psalms and readings This is often followed by the sermon, in which the Scriptures are expounded.

Does the Emmaus story not have striking parallels with this progression?

And then, of course, the disciples invite Jesus into their home and we are told that, when he was at table with them he "*took...blessed...and broke bread* and then *he shared it with them*. What do we have here? Answer...the four actions of the Eucharist which has formed the shape of the Liturgy of the Sacrament for Millennia.

And then, those disciples are transformed. They recognise Jesus, he is present with them: they are energised to go out and share the Good news. This is exactly what we hope will happen following worship. After Communion, in the Anglican rite, the clergy and people all pray together ***“Almighty God, we Thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Send us out in the power of the Spirit, to live and work to your praise and glory...”***

And so, Luke resurrection story was indeed intended to mould the Christian community: in mission and worship. And it can go on inspiring us and offering us a template for mission and worship today.

God in Christ does two things for his people. He shares their life and he changes it. These two themes of engaging and transforming run through this Gospel, but they still run through the life of the Church and its worship today.