



By the waters of Babylon...

A common liturgy during a time of physical separation

April 26, 2020 – Easter 3

Call to Worship

We walk this path together, and yet apart
It is a new trail.

We walk with old friends as well as new into this new and frightening world.
And yet, we know we do not walk alone.
Amongst the friends is the One who was crucified.
Amongst the friends is the One who was raised.
Come, let us walk together.

Confession

Holy Companion and friend,
We confess that during this time of physical isolation we have focused much on our own
needs, and not those of others.
We have focused on our own fear, and have done little to soothe the fears of others.
You walk alongside us and hear our needs, our fears, our story and we have little time or
energy to do the same for others.
Call us back to community. Call us back to you. (silent prayer) Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Nothing. Not a virus. Not even ourselves.
Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel, in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Prayer for Illumination

Open our eyes that we may see and know your Word. Illumine us.

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ^[b] ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, ^[c] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. ^[d] Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah^[e] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us^[f] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

In our own journey, what are the kinds of things that keep us from recognizing who it is that is walking with us on the road?

Are their disappointments that consume us? As you've lived these last few weeks physically isolated, has it impacted your ability to see?

As you imagine having a meal with others, what might these last few weeks make you hungry to learn, to see to know about those you dine with? About yourself?

An Illustration – from *Divine Inspiration: The Life of Jesus in World Poetry*

That Day

Cleopas and another, unaware
Of who it was walked with them as they waked
Wearily from Jerusalem to their town,
Listened with growing wonder as he talked
Of how the ancient Scriptures had led down
To this their day, this day of their despair.

Tongue-tied they were, or simply too polite

To interrupt a stranger's eloquence:
It did at least divert their troubled minds
From the unbearable burden of events
Summed up at Golgotha
(And the sun blinds
Them at its setting, westering into the night.)

Still, with a care for him, they bid him dine
At their villatic board. Slender the fare,
But he, their guest, soon was their generous host,
Blessing, breaking the bread. Caught in a stare
At more than meets the eye, they staring lost
The seen man in the unseeable Divine.

Off in a stunned trice then, they hurried back
To drear Jerusalem in time to hear
Simon's adventure and relate their own
Before their Subject chose to reappear
And satisfy his famished flesh and bone
With a broiled fish plucked smoking from the rack.

Mangled his wrists and ankles, gashed his side,
Yet death had not undone him – no no more
Than black holes can the Lord God's radiance.
No bar to him, that day, bomb, doubt, nor door.
Now pity holds him aloof. Were he to advance
Two inches nearer, we'd be terrified.

Offering

What of yourself do you bring this week to the table at Emmaus? What might you share with others on this journey?

Prayers of the People

This week, as you pray for those whom you know, pray too for those on the frontlines of this current crisis. Pray for communities around the world as we seek to find solutions to the virus, as well as the economic fallout.

Benediction

We walk by faith.

We walk with each other.

May we know that we also walk with our God – that same God who created us, redeemed us and sustains us.

Source material for this liturgy comes from *The Bible Workbench*, Vol 6, Issue 4 and Harold McCurdy, "That Day" in *Divine Inspirations: The Life of Jesus in World Poetry* by Robert Atwan, George Dardess, and Peggy Rosenthal, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 548-549.

This resource has been developed for the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse for use by members and friends of its congregations.