



DARE TO DREAM

3rd Sunday of Eastertide – Becoming the Face of Christ

Week Beginning 18th April

Before you begin the prayer...

It's not enough to proclaim, "Christ is risen!" It's not enough to believe in resurrection. At some point we have to move from the event of the resurrection to experiencing the resurrection. Experiencing resurrected life begins with recognizing the risen Christ among us.

A young woman noticed the increasing number of people living on the streets as she walked to work. Moved by compassion and a loving heart, she started to take food to those who were hungry. After a while, this community of homeless people started to ask her why she bothered with them. Her humble and quiet response, "I want to share the love and compassion that Jesus has for you."

Throughout the Gospel we hear of the many times Jesus fed the people. He sat and ate many meals, meals which would often transform the lives of those he ate with. He felt no shame in eating with the most impoverished in society; the outcasts, the sinners, the marginalised and the poor. Most notably he fed the five thousand, even when the disciples could not fathom how this could be possible. Today, the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus return to their friends (still locked in the room out of fear) and tell how Jesus is alive and had revealed himself when he sat and ate with them, breaking the bread in such a way that their eyes were opened and they recognised him.

Jesus enters the room once more and offers consolation and peace. He shows that he is not a ghost by asking for food and eating the fish they offer. When we break bread or share our food with the hungry, we are witnessing to the Risen Jesus. Christ manifests Himself through each one of us and we become a living and breathing witnesses that Jesus has indeed risen! We become the face of Christ to others.

As Catholic parishes in Gloucester, Somerset, Avon and Wiltshire we are called to be the face of Christ in our communities. We are called to witness with joy to the truth we hold and become beacons of hope and light to all those around us.

Video - Watch and listen to Mgr. Bernard Massey

Prayerfully read this passage from the Gospel of Luke 24:35-48

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened and supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I, myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have." And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate before them.

Then he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

- Take some to ponder on the words you have just read.
- Notice if there is anything, a word or phrase that stands out for you.
- Read the passage again and then reflect upon all or some of these questions: if you are doing this as a family or a group, make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak.

Personal Reflections

- How would you know that you are witnessing to the risen Christ?
- Why do you want to witness to Jesus?
- Have you ever thought that when you break bread or share your food with the hungry you are becoming the face of Christ for them?

Now thinking about your parish and local community

- In what ways does your parish/deanery actively support the needs of the local community?
- Are you aware of how different individuals in the parish are involved, for example in prison visiting, working for the local food bank, supporting any drop-in centre, refugees or asylum seekers, or environmental issues?
- St. Augustine invites us to receive the Body of Christ so that we may become the Body of Christ in our world. Would people outside of your parish recognise you as those who 'break bread for the world', especially those who hunger?
- Daring to dream – what kind of parish/deanery could you become in response to the needs of our world, that would lead to people wanting to join you?

Action

- Caritas is the umbrella organisation for Catholic Social Action. Take time this week to see what it does and how as a parish you can get involved in living the vision of Caritas as a parish.

<https://www.caritas.org/>

- Create a display board identifying the key elements of Catholic Social Teaching and how the parish could or does engage with each element.

Finish with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit for the grace to respond.

