

# CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Third Sunday of Easter

*This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday alone or with your household. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there. If there is more than one person present, choose someone to lead the prayer and one or two people to do the readings.*

*Whoever leads the prayer can say:*

The disciples on the road to Emmaus hear the Scriptures interpreted in a way that had never occurred to them before. It causes their hearts to burn within them; it is what they have been waiting to hear all their lives. It moves them to beg the Stranger, “Stay with us.” Our hearts burn as we hear Peter interpret Psalm 15 with the same striking authority. It is as if the words that speak of Christ’s Resurrection—“You have made known the way of life to me, you will fill me with gladness through your presence”—have totally revived Peter’s own life. The Word, who gives us the Eucharistic Bread, does so in the first place with a small group of followers in the context of an intimate meal. The memory of this can sustain us during this time when we are isolated from the larger community.

## **SIGN OF THE CROSS**

*After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:*

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

## **HYMN**

*Choose an appropriate song.*

*We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition, such as:*

O my God,

I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee,  
and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments,  
but most of all because they offend Thee, my God,  
who art all good and deserving of all my love.

I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more  
and to avoid the near occasion of sin.

Amen.

*The following are the readings of the Third Sunday of Easter.*

**A reading from  
the Acts of the Apostles**

**2:14, 22-33**

**O**N THE DAY of Pentecost Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd in a loud voice: “Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades; for it was impos-

sible for him to be held in its power since, as David says of him: *I saw the Lord before me always, for with him at my right hand nothing can shake me. So my heart was glad and my tongue cried out with joy; my body, too, will rest in the hope that you will not abandon my soul to Hades nor allow your holy one to experience corruption. You have made known the way of life to me, you will fill me with gladness through your presence.*

“Brothers, no one can deny that the patriarch David himself is dead and buried: his tomb is still with us. But since he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn him an oath to make one of his descendants succeed him on the throne, what he foresaw and spoke about was the resurrection of the Christ: he is the one who was not abandoned to Hades, and whose body did not experience corruption. God raised this man Jesus to life, and all of us are witnesses to that. Now raised to the heights by God’s right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised, and what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit.”

*The word of the Lord.*

℟ Thanks be to God.

— . PSALM 15 . —

℟ (11a) Show us, Lord, the path of life.

Or: Alleluia!

Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

I say to the Lord: “You are my God.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;

it is you yourself who are my prize.” ℟

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,

who even at night directs my heart.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight:

since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. ℟

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;

even my body shall rest in safety.

For you will not leave my soul among the dead,

nor let your beloved know decay. ℟

You will show me the path of life,

the fullness of joy in your presence,

at your right hand happiness for ever. ℟

**A reading from  
the first Letter of Saint Peter**

1:17-21

**I**F YOU ARE acknowledging as your Father one who has no favourites and judges everyone according to what he has done, you must be scrupulously careful as long as you are living away from your home. Remember, the ransom that was paid to free you from the useless way of life your ancestors handed down was not paid in anything corruptible, neither in silver nor gold, but in the precious blood of a lamb without spot or stain, namely Christ; who, though known since before the world was made, has been revealed only in our time, the end of the ages, for your

sake. Through him you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for that very reason—so that you would have faith and hope in God.

*The word of the Lord.*

**R** Thanks be to God.

**Alleluia, alleluia!** Lord Jesus, explain the Scriptures to us. Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us. **Alleluia!**

**A reading from  
the holy Gospel according to Luke**

**24:13-35**

**T**WO OF THE disciples of Jesus were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. Now as they talked this over, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising him. He said to them, “What matters are you discussing as you walk along?” They stopped short, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, “You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.” “What things?” he asked. “All about Jesus of Nazareth,” they answered, “who proved he was a great prophet by the things he said and did in the sight of God and of the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us: they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they did not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.”

Then he said to them, “You foolish men! So slow to believe the full message of the prophets! Was it not ordained that the Christ should suffer and so enter into his glory?” Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them. “It is nearly evening,” they said, “and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?”

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, “Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

**Allow for a few minutes of silent reflection. The following passage could be read:**

### *Suffering and Glory*

It is at home, in the family, that we can all learn the lesson of sacrifice, the miracle of grace that seems useless to the world. The "Great Silence" of the cloister begins in the stillness in the house when someone is ill, or the children sleep; the poverty and the dividing of Christ's garments, in the sewing, patching, and dividing at home; and so on, all through the lovely folly of the cross.

The heart that has been exchanged for Christ's heart radiates from the love of its own children to all the children of God, because now it cannot fail to love the Heavenly Father himself as Christ loves him.

There are not two kinds of love in Christ, one his suffering love, the other his risen love; there is only one. It is part of the glory of his Risen Life that in this love, even on the earth, is the beginning of the answer to his prayer that we all may be one.

On the road to Emmaus, looking back at the long story of his Passion in prophecy, and forward at the longer story of his Passion in us, he saw the answer to his prayer. "Ought not Christ," he said, "to suffer these things, and so enter into his glory?"

CARYLL HOUSLANDER

*Caryll Houselander († 1954) was an English mystic, poet, and an esteemed spiritual teacher. This excerpt is from The Risen Christ (Sheed and Ward, 1957).*

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### **INTERCESSIONS**

*The leader can begin with these words:*

God the Father sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. We beg him now for the fullness of life as we pray:

That those who should have been baptised at Easter may grow ever stronger in their faith as they wait a little while longer for this great grace. Lord, in your mercy,

**R** Hear our prayer.

That leaders of governments will work single-mindedly to keep their citizens safe from the corona virus, particularly key workers, medical staff, and those who are most vulnerable. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

For Christian families: that they will honour Christ as Lord in their hearts and homes. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied (*The Holy Father's Prayer Intention*). Lord, in your mercy, **R**

For the grace this week to remain conscious of Christ's abiding presence among us, that he may sanctify all that we say and do. Lord, in your mercy, **R**

**Personal intentions**

Our Father....

*The leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as:*

Lord Jesus, we offer ourselves to you, with all our worries and concerns. Make us the living stones of the Church in this difficult time, and when we are free once more to gather in our churches, may we be strengthened in faith, hope, and charity.

*An Act of Spiritual Communion:*

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.  
I love you above all things  
and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
come spiritually into my soul  
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and for ever.  
Amen.

*May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen.*

*To conclude the celebration, you can sing or recite the following or another suitable hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.*



*Regina cæli, lætare, alleluia,  
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,  
resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia;  
ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.*

Queen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia!  
for he whom you were worthy to bear, alleluia!  
has Risen as he said, alleluia!  
Pray for us to God, alleluia!

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## Walking with Christ this Week

*As we reflect on the story of Emmaus, let us press the Lord to stay with us, as the disciples did.*

*These prayers could be said as we begin and end our day, or perhaps along with Grace at breakfast and dinner.*

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

### ***SAINT PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE***

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me,  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

### ***PRAYER OF SAINT IGNATIUS***

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will, all I have and call my own.  
You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it.  
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.

### ***PRAYER FOR THE HOUSEHOLD***

Hear us, Lord,  
and send your angel from heaven  
to visit and protect,  
to comfort and defend  
all who live in this house.

Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

