



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2026 – Third Sunday of Easter

COLLECT

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 116. 1-3, 10-17

- 1 I love the Lord, for he has heard the voice of my supplication; ♦
because he inclined his ear to me on the day I called to him.
- 2 The snares of death encompassed me;
the pains of hell took hold of me; ♦
by grief and sorrow was I held.
- 3 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: ♦
'O Lord, I beg you, deliver my soul.'
- 10 How shall I repay the Lord ♦
for all the benefits he has given to me?
- 11 I will lift up the cup of salvation ♦
and call upon the name of the Lord.
- 12 I will fulfil my vows to the Lord ♦
in the presence of all his people.
- 13 Precious in the sight of the Lord ♦
is the death of his faithful servants.
- 14 O Lord, I am your servant, ♦
your servant, the child of your handmaid;
you have freed me from my bonds.
- 15 I will offer to you a sacrifice of thanksgiving ♦
and call upon the name of the Lord.
- 16 I will fulfil my vows to the Lord ♦
in the presence of all his people,
- 17 In the courts of the house of the Lord, ♦
in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. Alleluia.

A reading from the first epistle of Peter, chapter 1, verses 17-23.

If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply from the heart. You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is Luke, chapter 24, verses 13-35.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord **Thanks be to God.**

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Luke, chapter 24, verses 13-35.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognising him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. 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?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 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. 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.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, 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?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 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. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

A Reflection from Dave

In the book, the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams, we encounter the surreal adventures of Arthur Dent, a perfectly normal chap who somehow gets caught up in a space hopping adventure. To help him navigate this strange new world he is given a copy of the Hitchhiker's Guide which, amongst lots of confusing, conflicting and humorously unhelpful advice, has a clear message of help written on its front cover - "DON'T PANIC!" It acts as the encouraging voice of calm in the midst of the dark chaos around him.

Recently, many of us will have followed the far less fictional interstellar adventure, as the Artemis II mission launched four astronauts around the moon. As they travelled to the far side of the moon, the furthest any humans have been from our planet, they found themselves in a dark, isolated place, where they completely lost contact with earth due to the moon between them. There was a 40 minutes wait for communication to be reestablished, which it was, to a massive sigh of relief - "Don't panic everyone, it's all ok!"

For our two disciples on the road to Emmaus, it was as if they were on the far side of the moon, lost, in the dark, floating in the vacuum of life without Jesus. They never expected communication to be reestablished as they struggled to comprehend their loss. But like those astronauts, they were not alone. Even though they didn't realise it, the one they most needed was right there with them. At that moment of recognition, of reconnection over the breaking of bread, even though Jesus vanished, they were convinced that Jesus was with them.

Our world today can feel like a dark, chaotic place. Globally everything can feel like its going wrong, with ever increasing conflict, threats, and insecurity. Personally we will have our own concerns, whether in our lives, bodies or relationships. Like the Hitchhiker's Guide, we can be bombarded with things that are confusing, conflicting, or downright unhelpful.

But what was true for those first followers of Jesus is true for us too. In the darkest moments, when we feel most isolated and distant, we are never alone. We are the ones on an adventure, not into space, but into the strange new world of God that enters into our perfectly normal lives. A world where the dead are raised, dinner guests suddenly vanish, and the calm encouraging voice of the risen Jesus becomes all the navigation we need to face the world around us. For nothing, not even death, can stop him being with us, wherever we are, and whatever we face. Don't panic, do not be afraid - he is with us. Alleluia!