

**The Still Point**  
**A Time of Meditation and Reflection**  
**Easter Day (Evening Prayer)**

... At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;  
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,  
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,  
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,  
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance...

T.S. Eliot, *Burnt Norton*

Peace on each one who comes in need;  
**Peace on each one who comes in joy.**  
Peace on each one who offers prayers;  
**Peace on each one who offers song.**  
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,  
**Peace of the Spirit, the Triune One.**

**Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

**Opening Prayer**

O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: Grant that when we hear his voice we may know him who calls us each by name, and follow where he leads; who, with you and the Holy Spirit, lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**The Gospel**

*Luke 23:13-49*

Now on that same day, the first day of the week, two of the disciples 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 recognizing 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 recognized 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.

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you-- that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

**Poem:** "The Servant Girl at Emmaus"

*by Denise Levertov*

She listens, listens, holding  
her breath. Surely that voice  
is his—the one  
who had looked at her, once, across the crowd,

as no one ever had looked?  
Had seen her? Had spoken as if to her?

Surely those hands were his,  
taking the platter of bread from hers just now?  
Hands he'd laid on the dying and made them well?

Surely that face—?

The man they'd crucified for sedition and blasphemy.  
The man whose body disappeared from its tomb.  
The man it was rumored now some women had seen this morning, alive?

Those who had brought this stranger home to their table  
don't recognize yet with whom they sit.  
But she in the kitchen, absently touching  
the wine jug she's to take in,  
a young Black servant intently listening,

swings round and sees  
the light around him  
and is sure.

## **Meditation**

The gospel reading for the evening of Easter Sunday is one of the most rich and wondrous stories of the risen Lord appearing to his disciples. Two disciples on the way to Emmaus, overcome by sadness and distracted by their anxieties, failed to recognize the stranger they encountered on the road. Only later, when he blessed and broke bread with them in the inn, do the two recognize the stranger as Jesus.

On this Easter Day 2022, what anxieties are we experiencing that weigh us down to the point that we might miss the wondrous, gravity-defying message of Resurrection? That we do not recognize the risen Christ who comes to walk with us?

The extraordinary poem by Denise Levertov introduces a new perspective through a new person in the story. A kitchen servant at the inn recognizes the stranger through his voice, his hands, his face. She recognizes him as the one she had earlier seen... who had seen *her*, had spoken to *her*.

### **Questions for Reflection**

The poem is inspired by a 17-century [painting by Diego Velazquez](#).

Do the painting or the poem provide you any new angles or insights to this familiar gospel story?

In what ways have you encountered the risen Jesus - through a stranger, a friend, a recent occurrence in your life, in the natural world or the city we live in?

In the season of Eastertide to come, are there ways you would like to become more open to Christ's presence around us?

### **Prayers**

We bring before God someone whom we have met or remembered today

We bring to God someone who is hurting tonight and needs our prayer

We bring to God a troubled situation in our world

We bring to God, silently, someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God that we might grow in generosity of spirit, clarity of mind, and warmth of affection

We offer our thanks to God for the blessings in our lives

We name before God those who have died.

Gracious God, you hear all our prayers: those we speak aloud, those we hold in our hearts, and those prayers for which we have no words. Hear the prayers of your people, and grant them as may be best for us, for the sake of your holy name. **Amen.**

Accept our thanks for all you have done, O God. Our hands were empty, and you filled them.

May Christ's holy, healing, enabling Spirit be with us every step of the way, and be our guide as our road changes and turns, and the blessing of God our Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life be among us now and remain with us forever. **Amen.**

***Poem and Reflection offered by: Frank Nowell***