

Reflection for Easter Friday

Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'

This reflection picks up on the one that Martha gave us on Wednesday about learning to recognise the Christ who comes to us. For Mary and for the disciples it was Christ in person who revealed Himself to them although initially their sight was impaired and they were unable to recognise Him immediately.

But for us today the question is how are we to see Christ coming to us; how are we to recognize Him in today's world; how are we to encounter Him? Can we too meet the living Lord? One way surely has to be to follow the advice so often given, namely, to look for the Christ in others whoever they are whom we meet on our earthly pilgrimage. This we have to confess is not always easy to do and can demand a very great deal from us. In fact, it can prove all but impossible with some people whose life- styles we regard with prejudice or even abhor; those who have in some way crossed us or wounded us and of course those we would class as our enemies. How are we expected to see the Christ in them? Indeed, can it even be possible that there is anything in the least Christlike about them?

But this is where we have to understand the radical teaching of our Lord who emphatically told us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate and revile us. Mary was blinded by the tears of grief but what are the tears that blind us to seeing the Christ in all God's children? Mark Oakley writes this: 'Resurrection is not just a moment of seeing the faithfulness of God's love that searches us out and won't give up on us, it is a moment when human beings are reintroduced to each other across the gulfs they have constructed. This is resurrection as defrosting. It is resurrection as a second look at each other: a second look-not a first impression.'

At the present time of lockdown and self- isolation it is hard not to retreat into our own little world; to close the doors and allow a measure of fear and anxiety to be enclosed with us just as the disciples at first did after the death of Jesus. But if we are to emulate those first disciples we are surely called to reach out as they did in the certain knowledge that Christ **is** risen. Reach out to the Christ in others through phone calls, and all the wonderful IT means of communication at our disposal. Reach out not just to close friends and family but to all those who, as it were need a good hard second look so that we discern behind the mask with which they face the world a need for comfort, for reassurance, for companionship, albeit at a distance, and most of all for love. It is surely to such people that we are called most of all to share the joy and hope that the resurrection brings into our world; the joy and hope that has always and will always continue to bring light in the darkest of places. And in that resurrection light that illumines our encounters we will learn to recognise the Christ within them and know ourselves to be blessed just as truly as Mary and the disciples were when they met with the risen Christ.

Reach Out by Ian Adams

Life has an internal dimension.

Only you can know what it is to be you.

To know what it is to exist you have to go inwards.

The inner path requires your commitment

But an invitation comes to reach out.

To experience the sacrament of life

in engagement with whatever and whoever is around you.

To make the outer journey.

To touch the beautiful and broken body of the world

And there to discover the Christ

In all and for all.

So reach out.