

Along the track

The Resurrection

We can't say we weren't warned. 'I am going away but in a little while you will see me. Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. I will not leave you orphans.' We thought he was dead, our hopes and dreams destroyed. We loved him, his message just didn't inspire us – it gave us life, a purpose! But it is over, finished just like those prophets before who promised us so much.

Then the women came with the message: The tomb is empty. He is alive! We have seen him. We spoke to him! We didn't believe them. Peter rushed to the tomb – it is empty but he meets and speaks to Jesus. Jesus meets with Peter first. Was that because of what had happened on the night of his trial? He loved Peter – feed my lambs and feed my sheep, you are Peter and on this rock I will build what is to come, the impulsive Peter who he took aside often and spent so much time with him.

And they can't say they weren't warned. Destroy this Temple and in three days I will rebuild it! And they laughed in scorn. After that sham trial they thought it was over. They had triumphed but it was the other way around. Didn't they guard the tomb. Tell the people that his followers came and stole his body while the guards were asleep. They spread rumours before that had him killed. They can do it again. But they were unnerved, worried, plotting again.

We came together in that upper room in total confusion, even fear. If it is true, what would he say to us after what we did, after we deserted him, betrayed him. And he came to us. 'Peace be with you' he said. After all we had done, even after we had run away to hide and he told us to 'be at peace'. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled'. We felt his hands and feet, his wounds! Do you have anything to eat? Is that all he asks of us – no explanations, apologies! We were speechless – with shame and remorse but with joy in every part of us.

And it all came back – I will not leave you orphans, I am coming back, you are my friends, I have chosen you to do my work, I will send one to help you. He was a living example of forgiveness, compassion, of mercy. He was not here to judge us, but wasn't

he always like that? Wasn't that the cornerstone of his message, the motivation for what he did in those three short years?

Then he left us. In joy and confusion, in disbelief and guilt. Peter and six of us decided to go fishing. We went back to what we knew – we went back to the boats. It was a terrible night and we caught no fish. As we landed a stranger waited for us – 'Have you got any fish, my friends?' 'No', Peter said in the abrupt way he had at times. Throw out your nets on the other side and we did so reluctantly. And we caught so many the boats began to sink. Then we realised who the stranger was! He took some fish and cooked it for our breakfast. He was helping us understand by just spending time with us. We were not abandoned as we had done to him, we were forgiven and we came to realise what his words about resurrection meant, what 'I have come that you may have life to the full' was all about. When we learn to forgive and forget, when we show mercy and compassion, when we work to improve the lot and lives of others, when we look after the sick, the lonely, the imprisoned, the stranger and the dispossessed, then our lives are transformed too. When we love others as he loved us – he was showing us what that meant.

Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no feet but yours, no hands but yours. Yours are the eyes with which Christ looks compassionately on a hurting world. Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good. Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all now.*

That's what he was telling us! As Pope Francis said: Who am I to judge – who indeed after Jesus' example.

*** The Prayer of St Teresa of Avila**

Regards
Jim Quillinan

Email: jquillinan@dcsi.net.au