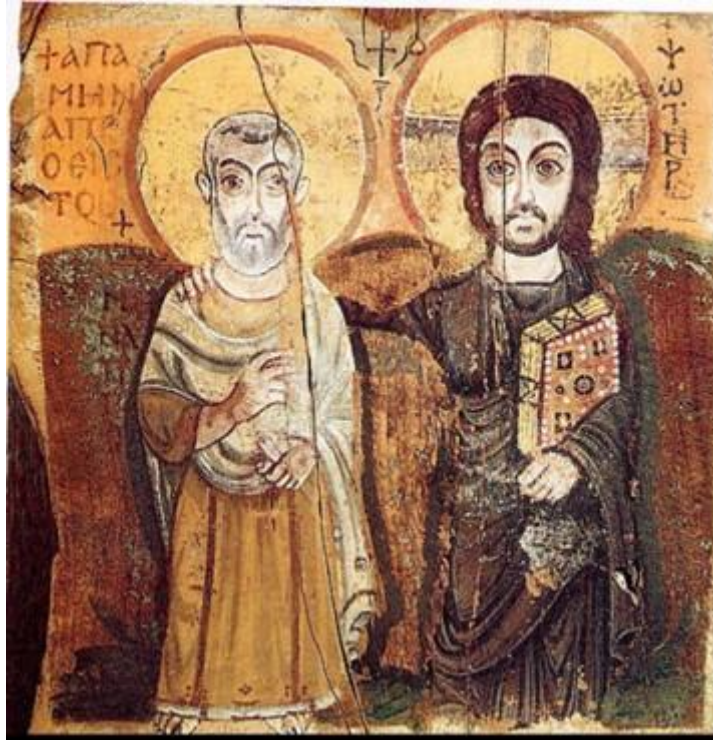


Peregrinos – bearers of hope. Sing up, and Keep on Walking!



The Taizé 'friendship' icon. Remember, Jesus the pilgrim, the compañero, walks at your side... seeing what you see, walking the ways you walk... breaking Word and Bread, and encouraging you to sing up with him – Alleluia, to our Risen Lord. To learn to see with his eyes, and walk his ways... and bear a new hope, a new recognition, to a world where he is ever alongside, unexpected, impossible, unrecognised.... But there.

Are you watching them? The Peregrine Falcons? They're not nesting in Worcester Cathedral this year, but, if you're feeling bereft, they *are* nesting in 'Old Joe' at Birmingham Uni, who have a livestream¹. There's something about Peregrine livestreams that catches our heart ... the little chicks hatching brings such hope for Spring, and a sense of new life and possibility.

The name "peregrine" comes from the Latin word "peregrinus," meaning "wandering" or "travelling," because of the bird's migratory habits in many parts of the world; travelling long distances between wintering in the South of America or Canada, and returning to their breeding grounds.

¹ [University of Birmingham Peregrine Falcons - University of Birmingham](#)

Today we are reminded that we are all 'peregrinos'² – pilgrims and travellers in this world - as today is a story of journeys. Both in our gospel, and in the new chapters of faith we are celebrating. We are called to be pilgrims in the faith, journeying together, sharing hope together, and bringing hope into a world where for so many – like the disciples on the Emmaus road - there is so much pain, and nothing really makes sense.

Today we celebrate at S. Peter's. In their baptism, Sarah and Krystal are beginning a new chapter in their journey of faith, becoming *peregrinos* – pilgrims in the faith, beginning a new chapter of the journey they began before they were born. We celebrate the journey of faith that has brought them here, and the journey they will make going on together, with our Lord. And in that celebration, we are reminded of our own baptism, and our own journey, and the One who walks at our side.

Sarah and Krystal came to join us on Messy Church because they were walking their dog in the churchyard when they met Cynthia, who invited them in, to explore Jesus.

But perhaps too, they were there in the churchyard because of an encounter some time ago when Sarah, walking in a park, was met by someone who put a leaflet into her hand about Jesus. Sarah has always wondered if that encounter was with an angel... do ask her the story... it may have been. Of course it may have been our Lord himself, present but not recognisable. Himself, or borne in the hearts of one of his followers.

For sure, it was Jesus that nudged Cynthia into the Churchyard and gave her the welcome to share. And her heart that was quick and open enough to respond to the nudge, and Sarah and Krystal's hearts that were open and courageous enough to respond to the invitation.

How often we meet, or bear, Jesus unaware.... But how often, like the disciples, do we invite him in, and how open are our hearts to see?

In our story today, Jesus calls his disciples 'slow of heart'. It is an encouragement to us, and a hint –

we are to see with our hearts, to know with our hearts, to trust our hearts.
Because every moment they will reveal to us the hidden Lord, in plain view. Our
Companion on the journey.

² Spanish for 'pilgrim' or 'traveller'

I love the roots of words, and the word *companion* is a fabulous word when we speak of journeying in faith together. A companion, literally, is someone who breaks bread with us – *compañero*: com – with, pan – bread. Jesus is our *compañero*: who comes to us as the bearer of his mystery and love, and shares it with us – breaking Word and Bread to take within us, to nourish us in heart, mind and body. Of course, today Sarah and Krystal will also receive their first Holy Communion, and as we pray and give thanks for them, let us, too, renew our thanksgiving for the gift of WayBread... Food for the Journey.

As we walk on the road we know we are on the pilgrimage we walk not only *with* Jesus but *in him, and he in us*. ... for he is the Living Way we walk in, and the Living Bread within us.

At the end of our story the disciples run back to Jerusalem – but they are not simply retracing their steps – something has changed - not because the landscape has changed, but because the people have. It is dark now, and any journey by night, even along the same track, would be ten times more risky, but they are no longer sad, lonely and afraid – but confident, hope-filled and brought back to life. They travel through the dark, but they have learnt to see with their hearts.

They journey back bearing witness to the possibility of change, to the expectation that the future need not be the same as the past, but different and better. To encourage their brothers and sisters to be open to see with the heart, and meet the unexpected - even the impossible - travelling on the road. To break bread, and share hope.

The world is at such a low-point when it comes to hope. We have a crisis of hope in so many ways. But hope is a central theme in our Christian faith. It comes to meet us, walking along the road, and it calls us to quicken our hearts... and to share the hope we have found. At the heart of our Gospel stands the Empty Tomb and the encounters – so often unexpected and at first unrecognised – but always life-changing – with the risen Jesus along the road.

This story is one that gathers encounters, and I wonder who is coming to your mind that has encouraged you on the road, and borne the risen Lord to you – or when you feel you have encountered him, or borne him to others?

Luke does not tell us a story today of some glowing far-off Easter morning 2000 years ago, but what is always happening in our lives / in human life. For me this story has for a few years made me think of Susan. As we walk on Holy Thursday, bearing the Blessed Sacrament between our two churches, praying for our community, the

way is reasonably long, and dark but, as we near Hasbury... walking toward us comes a figure. Our hearts wonder... and then recognise something in the way she walks... it is our Susan, come to journey with us, to lift and cheer us. Now, too, I will think of Sarah and Krystal, and of Cynthia and the angel / Jesus that Sarah met, walking in the park.

And we are called, like the peregrine falcons we welcome with such joy and hope each Spring, to ourselves be *peregrinos* – people who travel our ways carrying within us resurrection hope, wherever our paths lead us. “Then they told what had happened on the road” says Luke.... And so we shall, too, - singing a song of hope and encouragement to the world...

To learn to see with our hearts, to know with our hearts, to trust our hearts – to see our Lord alongside us, even when we do not recognise him, even when we are weary, even when the world makes no sense and seems full of violence, grief and loss. Even in the simplicity of daily bread and how we break and share it³.

S. Augustine of Hippo has good words for pilgrims in the faith – “let us sing Alleluia here on earth.... in the way that travellers are in the habit of singing, sing, but keep on walking. What does it mean, “keep on walking”? Go onward always ... If you are going onward, you are walking; but always go onward in goodness, onward in the right faith... Sing up, and keep on walking”.⁴

So, sisters and brothers let us sing up our Alleluias ...for we have a song of hope and joy

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed, Alleluia

³ This homily with huge thanks to the inimitable Michael Sadgrove, and his wisdom shared along the way. including his ‘Four Pilgrim addresses in Santiago’

⁴ from a sermon by St. Augustine (Sermo 256, I.2.3.: PL 38, 1191-1193)