

5th Sunday of Easter – Thoughts from Leisa

"Do not let your hearts be troubled," seems sometimes like a pretty tall order, doesn't it - this incredible passage from John's gospel, an encouragement, given at many funerals and through times of change, transition and the unknown?

"Do not let your hearts be troubled." The disciples do not seem too sure they can do that, in their time of trial. Judas just left in the dark, betrayal on his mind and Philip wants Jesus to call God down, so he can have proof.

During times of change we have our questions and concerns too. The disciples troubled hearts are the same as our troubled hearts; and troubled hearts are very human hearts and yet Jesus wants them and us to be reassured.

Jesus attempts to still their troubled hearts by telling them he is leaving, but that he will make a place for them where he is going which might be a great comfort for us, when we know that one day we will follow those who have left. That one day we will be the same place as our loved ones, when we breathe our final breath. But we can still abide in him now and follow him afresh today, as he calls us and all people, to come out of the darkness, and bring our hearts and lives into his marvelous light!

When someone is preparing to leave our lives, our hearts need to be able to lament, to rejoice in all that was good and to let go; and at the right time live again! Whether this is in a new way, in a new place or in a new relationship with others.

In this time of remembering, VE Day brings to our hearts those who were distanced from their loved ones, through the need to both protect and defend our nation, our children and the most vulnerable across the World. So many lessons learned in letting go and living again, in being resourceful and responding to need - in remarkable ways. Do you hear an echo of that same resolve in our nation today?

So, let us have a few moments to consider those relationships or things familiar that we might have had to have let go of, not just through this pandemic but throughout our lives...

Let us name some of them!

- Children or relatives far from home
- A job or role coming to an end
- Loved ones, through distance or dispute
- Disease
- Death
- Something else?

What is dwelling in your heart today?

In John's gospel 'dwelling places' is translated 'to abide'; 'household or family' rather than "house or building". Abiding gives the sense of ongoing community and relationship, wherever we are. In the Father's household or family there are many ways of being and abiding, praying and sharing, in relationship together, through Jesus Christ - during separation and even after death.

This is a great encouragement and an invitation to lead us to a place of continuing relationships, together, even if, for now that is through treasured memories of loved ones gone before us, or through the impact which a special person has had on our lives; or in the welcoming of a new way of being in relationship with God and others, while we are apart.

Just as the disciples would have to learn to know Jesus, through the Holy spirit and not through flesh, we too have to be ready to explore and build up a new way of living through Jesus, as children of God. Known by God and prepared to make God known, in our communities, now and when we walk free from this current crisis.

In these days, as they did through the crisis of war and the celebration of its end, we will have to become ready to live in a new way for God. Just like those first disciples, not relying on what they have known before. But holding onto our resolve, in the strength of the foundations which have and are being built in our relationships, near and far and in faith. Across our communities and across the world, today, knowing that God will make a way for a new vision. One that will sustain us and build up within our hearts and minds, a spiritual home for every heart open to believing and sharing in the Good News of Jesus Christ for all. Trusting in that corner stone of faith and the promises of our God, through every crossroads and concern of our lives, now and forever.

Amen

