

Reading: Luke 24:36-48

Again, Jesus comes to the disciples, again he uses the greeting we learned about last week: "Peace be with you." The disciples, just like we would, have both joy and disbelief in their hearts. Joy at seeing Jesus again. But disbelief that this can really be Jesus. "Maybe it's a ghost," they say to themselves.

To knock the doubt that he might be a ghost right out of the park, Jesus says, "Do you have something to eat?" So, they offer him some broiled fish, which he eats. Ghosts don't eat.

Many times, the risen Jesus appears to the disciples and eats with them. By the lake he cooks them breakfast and they realize who it is, and on the road, he breaks bread and the couple realise who he is.

There is something special about eating together. We become something more when we eat with other people.

Last month I went to South Korea to represent our church. There were Anglicans from all over the world. A smaller grouping of east Asian Anglicans from Japan, Taiwan, China, the Philippines, and Korea had worked together on their own Eucharistic Prayer, and the archbishop of Korea used it for our closing worship. The Eucharistic Prayer is that part of the service sometimes called the Great Thanksgiving. It is when the priest gives thanks on our behalf with the bread and the wine. What was really interesting was how the people from these east Asian countries had woven into their Eucharistic prayer what was important to their culture. A common saying among them is the question, "Have you eaten yet?" Feeding a friend or a stranger lies at the heart of these cultures. You don't send a visitor away hungry. Jesus, the Divine host of every communion service, is inviting us to his table. Not so much a memorial of his death, but a resurrection meal like the fish of today's gospel, or the bread of the road to Emmaus, or the breakfast by the lake.

Scholars have long debated the exact ethnicity and nationality of Jesus. Recently, at a theological meeting scholars had a heated debate on this subject. One by one, they offered their evidence...

THREE PROOFS THAT JESUS WAS MEXICAN:

- 1. His first name was Jesús*
- 2. He was bilingual*
- 3. He was always being harassed by the authorities.*

JESUS WAS ITALIAN:

- 1. He talked with his hands*

2. *He had wine with every meal*
3. *He used olive oil.*

But then there were equally good arguments that....

JESUS WAS A CALIFORNIAN:

1. *He never cut his hair*
2. *He walked around barefooted*
3. *He started a new religion.*

But, perhaps the most compelling evidence....

TWO PROOFS THAT JESUS WAS ACTUALLY A WOMAN:

1. *He kept trying to get the message across to a bunch of men who JUST DIDN'T GET IT*
2. *And even when he felt like death he had to get up and make breakfast.*

There is a long tradition that Jesus comes and eats with us when we share food together. My grandmother had on her wall a little framed tapestry. It said, "Christ is the unseen guest of every meal."

Many of us have Celtic blood and in the Celtic tradition you discover Jesus in feeding the stranger. One Celtic saying goes like this...

*I saw a stranger yester'en,
I put food in the eating place,
drink in the drinking place,
music in the listening place
and in the sacred name of the Triune
He blessed myself and my house,
my cattle and my dear ones,
and the lark sang in her song
often
often
often
goes Christ in the stranger's guise.*

I want to suggest two things for us to takeaway today. The first is that Christ is still hungry in our neighbourhood and in our world. Just as Jesus came to the disciples all those years ago and asked for food, so many in our world are asking for food.

Who among us is not moved by the pictures of children who through no fault of their own stretch out their hands for food in Gaza, who among us is not moved by pictures of children reaching out their hands for food in Sudan. Who among us are not moved by the children in our own city who go to school hungry. In them Jesus is still hungry and asking for food.

Secondly, Jesus is also hungry in the minds and hearts of so many in our world seeking meaning and purpose. You can have all the material comforts of the modern world and still be hungry for meaning and purpose.

The church: you and me, the people of God, have so much to offer these people. Jesus through us can give meaning, purpose, direction, and hope. If we ask him.

Maybe you are sitting here thinking actually I'm hungry for meaning and purpose in my life too.

In a recent pastoral letter, the bishops of Zimbabwe offered a prayer...

*Lord, you asked for my hands that you might use them for your purpose.
I gave them for a moment then withdrew them for the work was hard.
You asked for my mouth to speak out against injustice.
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.
You asked for my eyes to see the pain of poverty.
I closed them for I did not want to see.
You asked for my life that you might work through me.
I gave a small part that I might not get too involved.
Lord, forgive my calculated efforts to serve you
Only when it is convenient for me to do so,
Only in those places where it is safe to do so,
And only with those who make it easy to do so.
Father, forgive me, renew me,
Send me out as a usable instrument
That I might take seriously the meaning of your cross.*

In our neighbourhood and in our hearts, Jesus is still asking "Give me something to eat."