Easter 3A 2026 Luke 24:13-35

Emily Dickinson famously said, *"Hope" is the thing with feathers- / That perches in the soul- / And sings the tune without the words- / And never stops - at all-*...But just a few years ago, a contemporary writer, Caitlin Seida, wrote a poetic rebuttal entitled *Hope is Not a Bird, Emily, It's a Sewer Rat,* in which she argued, *Hope is not the thing with feathers / That comes home to roost / When you need it most. / Hope is an ugly thing / With teeth and claws...And survives in the ugliest parts of our world, / Able to find a way to go on / When nothing else can even find a way in*...Two very different perspectives, which we might expect from two women who lived and wrote two centuries apart; but what strikes me is that as different as their artistic expressions are, their theme, *hope*, is a universal experience. Hope is what makes us people of faith. Hope is what makes us human.

Last week during his visit with us Bishop Kevin lifted up the conclusion of John's gospel where John tells us that Jesus did many signs that were not written down, but these things *were* written so that we could believe that Jesus is the Son of God and by believing, have life in him. Bishop noted that those words were really written to us, because unlike Thomas, who eventually did get his personal, physical visit from the resurrected Jesus and the opportunity he said he needed to touch the nail marks, we don't get to see. We always have to be the people who believe *without* seeing. As I sat this week, chewing on that sermon, I thought about how difficult it can be for us to believe some of what was written down in scripture—and not just talking snakes and burning bushes, water turned to wine or blind men being made to see. But the promise that Jesus' life of humble loving service can revolutionize the world…that's a tough thing to believe when we see how much really would need to change, and how drastically, for our society to truly reflect God's vision for the human community. And that's where today's story speaks a word of relevant solidarity: it could just as easily be us as the disciples on the road to Emmaus saying, *Don't you know what things have been taking place these days? How are we expected to have hope in the midst of this mess?*

Today we are not in John's gospel, with the resurrected Jesus' many visitations in locked rooms and at beachside barbecues, nor are we in Matthew's gospel, with Jesus' quick and joyful turn around between resurrection and ascension. The lectionary instead takes us to Luke's gospel, where the risen Jesus appears to the women, but when the women report back to the rest of the disciples, they think the story is nonsense. So Cleopas and the unnamed disciple head for home, or at least away from Jerusalem. This is where Jesus meets them on the road, but *their eyes were kept from recognizing him.* We don't know whether that was a divine act of God obscuring their vision or merely that their expectations of Jesus were so different that they could not even see Jesus when he was right in front of them. And it's no wonder when we listen to their description of him: *Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word...we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*...They call Jesus a prophet—not the Christ, the