

Bend the stubborn heart and will / Melt the frozen, warm the chill

Since Easter Sunday we have been reading the later chapters of our Gospels which deal with the resurrection of Jesus and the reaction of his disciples, male and female. What would you say are the most astonishing verses to be found in those readings? It could be said that one is last Sunday's question: *Lord, at this time are you going to restore the kingdom of Israel?* The other is the one posed by Peter at the very end of John's Gospel where he asks Jesus about the future of Jesus's favorite disciple: *Lord, what about him?*

A similar concern about "what next?" is shown by the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Not recognizing the risen Jesus walking with them, they bemoaned their shattered hope that Jesus (now crucified) *would be the one to redeem Israel.*

After how many years attending to the teaching and deeds of Jesus before his arrest were their minds still preoccupied with a political dream; that all Jesus was talking about during their travels between Galilee and Jerusalem was the restoration of the glory days of Kings David and Solomon – after centuries of Jews being oppressed by one Empire after another? I mean it looks like they *failed to understand* the very essence, the very depth of Jesus's actual aims in favor of getting even with all the oppressors of Israel's past and present, internal, and external.

Then came the dawning – which we call Easter. Maybe not as suddenly as described in the Gospels (which were the product of a sixty to seventy-year compilation after the death of Jesus). Out of the disappointment of such political concerns, you'd think they would have been open to recall their *whole* experience with Jesus, his parables, his healings – to realize that his mission was so much more profound. He came to cultivate the depths of which humanity is capable and from which each of us is destined to emerge. He came to heal our paralysis, open our eyes, open our ears, wake us up, chase what bedevils us, ground us in a Source that, as the Jesus of John's Gospel says, can "well up" from within us – that intimately. He alerted them and us to "calls" resonant from day to day, from moment to moment that accumulate until we ourselves become a call, a melody, a word made flesh – to move others, to save, to create a world.

That's when a Pentecost *personally* begins – when, as hopefully in the course of the Synod which is now occurring, suddenly there may appear . . . *tongues of fire, which will part and rest upon each of us.*

You do have to wonder whether the Pentecost of Luke's writing was a one-time event, its scope limited to a day in Jerusalem. You have to wonder whether it doesn't sum up a fertile period of early Christian time when the parables of Jesus, his healings began to sink in. For instance, the parable of the Lost Coin. Coins over time can wear away, lose their inscription, their value becoming invisible, reduced to a mere piece of metal. So do the deeper sentiments of life, the deeper thoughts of "why am I here, where did I come from, why is there not nothing rather than anything at all . . ." The loss of all those concerns is what drives the woman in the parable frantic (do you feel frantic sometimes?). She leaves nothing unturned, un-swept until those whys and wherefores begin to clear up, restoring real worth to her life – so that she has to tell everybody: *Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.*

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