

St John's, Ranmoor

Sanctuary at home

Refuge | Safety | A Holy Space



The Conversion of Paul - Hyatt Moore



On the Road to Emmaus - Helge Boe

Different Roads: Damascus and Emmaus

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,
'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
and before you were born I consecrated you;
I appointed you a prophet to the nations.'

Jeremiah 1.4, 5

...the new humanity that is created around Jesus is not a humanity that is always going to be successful and in control of things, but a humanity that can reach out its hand from the depths of chaos, to be touched by the hand of God.

Rowan Williams

Welcome and introduction

Welcome to Sanctuary.

May this be a peaceful space for you - a time of rest, reflection and intentional abiding in Word and prayer.

We will dwell with the idea of encounter with Jesus and what that might mean in our spiritual life; reflecting on scripture with music, poetry and silence.

At the end of an interview at St Paul's Cathedral in 2019 Rowan Williams was asked: 'Who is Jesus for you?' He replied:

*[Jesus is] the ground of all my hope;
the definition of what I long and pray to grow into in terms of obedience to and intimacy with God the Father;
the one who holds together a human race that's always trying to tear itself apart;
who gives the breath of his spirit so that we share life, not fight over it;
the one whose death and resurrection are the centrepiece of all human history;
I could go on all night and not say anything really...*

Throughout this short reflective liturgy feel free to say the words **in bold** out loud or pray them in the silence of your heart. God is listening.

Greeting

We come together from scattered lives now to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us

Silence is kept

As God's people we have gathered:
Let us worship him together.

Come O Lord and visit us in peace,
that we may rejoice before you with a perfect heart.

Music during which a candle may be lit:

The Road Home by Stephen Paulus

*Tell me, where is the road
I can call my own,
That I left, that I lost
So long ago?
All these years I have wandered,
Oh when will I know
There's a way, there's a road
That will lead me home?*

*After wind, after rain,
When the dark is done,
As I wake from a dream
In the gold of day,
Through the air there's a calling
From far away,
There's a voice I can hear
That will lead me home.*

*Rise up, follow me,
Come away, is the call,
With the love in your heart
As the only song;
There is no such beauty
As where you belong;
Rise up, follow me,
I will lead you home.*

Michael Dennis Browne (1940-)

Opening prayers

In the depths of my being
I become quiet and still;
I wait for you, my God,
Source of my salvation
Amen.

You, Lord, are in this place,

Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my heart,
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.

You, Lord, are in my life,
Your presence fills it.
Your presence is peace.
Amen

Readings

Acts 9.1-22

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Luke 24.13-35

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Read again the texts from scripture and the Michael Dennis Browne poem

In the time of silence which follows, reflect on your journey of faith.

You may feel prompted to focus on a verse or phrase from the scripture readings that has resonated with you.

You may want to consider words from Browne's poem *The Road Home*, meditating on how you have encountered Jesus in your life.

Was it a sudden encounter?

Was it like a long walk in conversation with a friend?

Response

A time of silence

In the silence
**I receive once more
this gift of my life
from you.**

Hold me in your stillness
**simplify me,
and take possession of me,
my God.**

Angela Ashwin

At the end of the silence

Chant

Oh, Lord hear my prayer
Oh, Lord hear my prayer
When I call answer me
Oh, Lord hear my prayer
Oh, Lord hear my prayer
Come and listen to me

Taize

Prayers

I put aside my weighty cares and leave
my wearisome toils for a while.
I abandon myself to you, O God,

and rest for a little in you.
I enter the inner chamber of my soul,
and seek only God and the things
that can help me in my quest for you.
Come then, Lord my God, teach my heart
where and how to look for you,
where and how to find you.

after St Anselm (1033-1109)

O good Jesus,
Word of the Father and brightness of his glory,
whom angels desire to behold:
teach me to do your will
that, guided by your Spirit,
I may come to that blessed city of everlasting day,
where all are one in heart and mind,
where there is safety and eternal peace,
happiness and delight,
where you live with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
world without end.

after Gregory the Great (604)

A prayer for the end of the day

Light of the world,
Enter into the depths
of our lives.
Come into the dark
and hidden places.
Walk in the storehouse
of our memories.
Hear the hidden secrets
of the past.
Plumb the very depth
of our being.
Be present through
the silent hours,
And bring us safely
to your glorious light.



David Adam

Prayers conclude with The Lord's Prayer

Blessing

We are called and loved by God the Father
and kept safe by Jesus Christ.

**May mercy, peace and love be ours in abundance,
from God that Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

May the light of Christ our Lord shine in all our hearts.

Amen



The Emmaus Road II - Daniel Bonnell