

Sermon for St Peter De Beauvoir  
April 18<sup>th</sup> 2021  
Luke 24 36-48

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May I speak in the name of the Lord. Please be seated.

*'He opened their minds to understand the scriptures.'*

The opening of the disciples' minds is a key moment in today's Gospel reading from Luke.

The disciples are bewildered. They cannot believe that Jesus could be standing among them when he is meant to be dead. And so Jesus **OPENS** their minds so that they understand.

How must that have felt, to have their minds *opened by Christ*?

In the story that immediately precedes this one in Luke, we hear of another opening – this time on the road to Emmaus. Christ **opens the eyes** of the travellers so that they understand who he is.

It seems that an inner opening is a very good thing as we approach the Gospel stories. Because the events are so beyond our normal experience that they cannot be understood rationally. Our critical, reasoning brain, which likes to define and dissect, and can be so brilliant at many things, is simply not up to the job.

In Christ, we are dealing with the truly extraordinary. A love so limitless that it forgives everyone, no matter what. An openness so radical that it transcends everything, even being crucified.

*I told you I would conquer death, he tells his disciples in today's story. I told you I would rise again. And here I am.*

Being open isn't always easy. The disciples cannot believe what they are seeing, even though Jesus is standing right in front of them. And just like them, our own minds hanker after certainties. We often need to put things into boxes, and label them. We can take the most well intentioned idea and turn it into a dogma.

Perhaps the **key** to openness could lie In Matthew 22, in what Jesus called his first and greatest commandment, from while all his other teachings seem to flow, like an abundant river.

That key is love.

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

With love, the possibility of openness.

With openness, the joy of understanding.

The Duke of Edinburgh, whose funeral was yesterday, famously disliked long sermons. He said: "The mind cannot absorb what the backside cannot endure."

So in that spirit, I will close with the briefest of prayers.

Dear God,

We thank you for this powerful story in Luke's Gospel.

We ask that you open our minds that we may meet you in Christ, and fully understand your radical openness of love.

AMEN.