

## Third Sunday of Easter

We are working to have a new website designed within a matter of weeks. It will be launched on the weekend of Pentecost. That certainly marks a good beginning for an important parish initiative. The birthday of the Church will herald the launch of our revamped website. We hope it will have a fresher look and that the information for people who visit the church website, particularly if they are using their smartphones rather than their PC, laptop or I-pad, is immediately accessible. One of the challenging features of our new site is that we will be able to discover what part of the site our visitors most regularly access. We have an average of 250 hits per week, mostly to discover Mass times, I imagine. Our reading patterns have changed and are being continually re-shaped by the lay-out of newspapers and by how information is delivered on-line. So, I have to ask myself regularly who might turn to the weekly reflection page and what they hope to find on it. And even if they click, do they read right to the end. I often reserve a punchy sentence for the close, but even then am not sure readers persist to the end.

In the quieter days after Easter I have spent a good deal of time reading and most of that has been off-line. Sitting at my desk, in an armchair, standing on the bus, or in my seat beside the window in the train, both my posture, the way in which I read and the material I have been perusing have all been traditional. Holy Week was so hectic, the spiritual and scriptural diet of the Triduum so rich, and the problems thrown up by the resurrection stories read to us each day at Mass during the Octave so challenging, I decided I would read in greater depth about the Easter story. I love the *Acts of the Apostles*, so I feel I have my finger on the pulse of the excitement of the early Church. And the stories of that first Easter Sunday never lose their fascination for me. How I would love to have been with Cleopas and the other unnamed disciple on the road to Emmaus and hear their travelling companion explaining the scriptures. Would I have been any quicker on the up-take than they were, would my heart have burned within me as I listened to the story.

Ignatius of Loyola developed the idea of *composition of place* to help people at prayer who were trying to situate themselves close to Jesus, and I find that very useful. Was it hot that Easter Sunday, was the road to Emmaus dusty, did they meet any travellers going in the other direction, how much did Jesus resist their invitation to join them for a meal, were there other guests in the inn at Emmaus when they sat down to table? Asking oneself these questions heightens the enjoyment of reading, especially if the story is already vaguely known to one. I know that we inter-act with the screen, that the on-line reading experience engages us by inviting us to click or rush to a link, but I found during my reading in the Easter Octave that inter-action with traditional reading material, too, brings rich rewards. Take a leaf out of Ignatius of Loyola's book and after every sentence of a scripture text you read, ask yourself what was it really like, how does it speak to me, is it as fresh today as it was when the events themselves happened for the first time?

**Father Patrick**