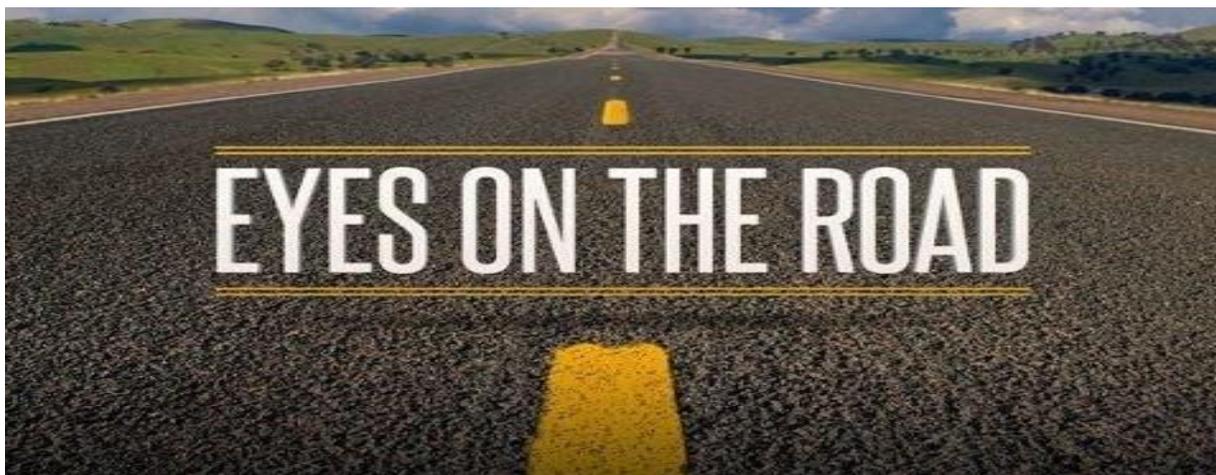




SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
MAY 21, 2017



Introduction to the Word:

The Easter Season is a 50 Day Period Where Jesus Shows Himself to His Disciples. He often does this "on the road". So for several weeks we are going to look at how Jesus show Himself and ask if we His followers today show Him the same way by keeping our **Eyes on the Road**.

The Resurrection appearance stories are filled with examples of how the disciples did not recognize Jesus, they took their eyes off the road (the way) and focused instead on doubt and whisper. They thought he was a gardener, a ghost, or a stranger. As we walk on the way we must keep our "eyes on the road."

Three weeks ago we began with the gentle nudge that it takes *focus, firmness and faithfulness*. This week we continue our walk and our series of messages to help us see the distractions and learn tools we need.

Two weeks ago with we reminded that the Good Shepherd calls out to us, we need on the road to listen for His voice – not just travel in our direction.

Last week, we heard that we must look for Him - and that we must encounter Him. Jesus who reveals Himself to us by saying: 'I am the Way' – Jesus is a road. A road is a journey. 'I am the Truth' – the Truth that meets us on the road. We Christians have not got the Truth. The Truth has got us. 'I am the Life' – this journey of Truth gives us life. When we believe in Jesus, we find life. And we decided on two practical ways: First,- make an appointment with God Second, Go and Follow. [Check out the messages](#) and bring a friend this Lord's Day to Mass

Warm Up Activity:



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Living the Christian life is really all about is living with Jesus in faith as our core - Keeping on Eye on Him who is the Way. (Road) and making Him the Truth and the Life. Discuss a moment when you found it easy to trust in Him and a time when it was more difficult.

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Leader: Confident that Jesus is with us always as “The Way,” we pray to be mindful and convinced of His consuming compassion and boundless mercy.

Lord Jesus, you reveal the face of God to us, **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you promise to abide with us forever, **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you fill us with your Holy Spirit, **Lord, have mercy.**

Let us pray together our Heart to Home Prayer:

*God Our Heavenly Father, we long to make our thoughts your thoughts,
and our ways your ways. As we prepare with attentive mind and open heart
to hear your Word Lord, we long to be empowered with your Spirit
so that we may bring your Word to our families, our parish and our communities.
This, our prayer, we make through the intercession of Our Lady of the Visitation and in name of
Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

(Please select one person –not including the leader – to take a turn at reading the scripture passages below.)

FIRST READING (St. Luke: Acts 8:5–8, 14–17)

In those days: Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Christ to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city.

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit; (for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (1 Peter 3:15–18)

Beloved: In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear; so that, when you are maligned, those



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who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ, may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (John 14:15–21)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

"The one who has my commandments and keeps them is the one who loves me; and the one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Allow a few minutes for quiet and for a brief reflection on a meaningful word or thought)

COMMENTARY:

Consider hearing again the Sunday Message

For many of us as we travel with our GPS showing us the way, we trust that the directions were inputted correctly and that the way will get us there. But without doubt there are moments where we feel a bit alone in the doubt of "what if" its wrong and and I am going the wrong way?

In the Gospel, Jesus' farewell address to the apostles at the Last Supper shows again and again that the disciples were all too dependent on the personal presence and intervention of Jesus. They cling to Him, expecting Him to do everything: to protect them from enemies, from doubt and uncertainty and risk. Their faith is like that of children, and their love for Jesus is portrayed as a childish love, consisting of a clinging dependence, even a sense of panic at the thought of Jesus leaving them, as "orphans," on their own. Jesus' promise to them is to return to be with them again, but in *a new way* while conferring on them *a new life*.

The reminder of Jesus that we are not "orphans" is not like a parent reassuring a child that a warm sweater is present in their overnight bag, but a reminder that since we have pressed "Go" and we are now following with a daily appointment with Him – trust. But Jesus also desired in spite of His soon lack of physical absence, that they know His voice must still be heard - as clear as an intercom and that they must do the proclaiming (and so must we).



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That it is not just about living with surety and being disposed to serenity, but also acting uniquely because we are not orphans – we are children of God. That in the notes you hit in your workplace, living room, classroom and kitchen - do you lift others up or drop them down? In the stories you tell, the tasks you do, the books you read, the computer sites you visit, the store fronts you glance at - do you lift others up or drop them down? Is there a uniqueness in your actions which tell other – proclaim like an intercom – the love of God for you, the confidence of life you possess because of Him and surety of the way you go because not only do you have your eye on the road but He does too!

We are called to be different - for we are to support one another; to be that reminder for each other that we are not alone. Again this is why the appointment with God each day is important. Again this is why the decision to Go and Follow is so crucial. Again this is why Making Sunday Matter all week along is so vital. Again this is why Investing and Inviting in Others to be with us is fundamental. Our Calling, our mission is to transform our world, with God's word, one heart at a time - let's start with our own and then move toward another and make a difference while we keep our eye on the road

*(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to react to the **Commentary** to identify a newly discovered insight or idea.)*

Questions for Reflection and Discussion: (15-20 minutes)

(1 Peter) *“Be ready to make your defence to anyone ... yet do it with gentleness and reverence.”*

- a) Have you ever experienced this kind of testimony, personally?
- b) What has Pope Francis done to counter this kind of attitude or behaviour?

Take a few moments individually to write down the names of people you wish were closer to God - maybe it's a son, a daughter, a neighbour, a coworker, a sibling, a parent and commit before others to make an appointment with God to pray for them, or fast for them, or do an activity of kindness in their name

Read aloud again together these words: *“I will not leave your orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me but you will see me, Because I live, you also will live.* Name the feelings which you have as you hear these words? How does knowing this is truth impact your walk on the road?

As we make our way through this Message Series which is on Discipleship and our walk of faith as Christians and the Church - If you could see one change through this series, what would it be? Share those with Father.

Intercessions:

Leader: Our response: Lord Hear us



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- For Pope Francis: may God strengthen him in his apostolic ministry as the successor of Peter and the shepherd of Christ's faithful people here on earth. We pray to the Lord.
- For the young people of the parish who received the Sacrament of Confirmation: may the Holy Spirit be a familiar friend in their lives. We pray to the Lord.
- For the children of the parish who are receiving their First Holy Communion: may their childlike trust remind us to open our hearts to the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist. We pray to the Lord.
- For parents who are preparing for the baptism of their child: may they be the best teachers of their child in the ways of faith by the good example that they offer. We pray to the Lord.
- For those from our parish community considering a Vocation to priesthood and religious life. For our two seminarians Hayden and Robin. May they experience the love of the Risen Lord as they seek to discern His will for their lives. We pray to the Lord.
- For areas of the world in need, especially in Kenya and in Haiti. May our prayers and support aide them and bring them closer to Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- For all who have died, as well as for all the intentions recorded in the parish book of prayer. We pray to the Lord.

Leader: **Let us seek the intercession of the Patroness of our Parish as we pray:
Hail Mary**

Closing Activity and Prayer (15-20 minutes)

(This time is reserved for quiet prayer as well as for an action-response to the communal reflections. You may wish to create and add petitions of prayer at this time. This time also intent to provide moments to connect and "outreach" to the larger community.)

GROUP PRAYER/ ACTION:

- Prayerfully consider whom you know that is doubting and would being a part of a Small Group help them (or even part of Starting Point) – have you considered inviting them?
- Prayerfully discuss as a Group your involvement in our May 27th Service Saturday...how will your group help? Check our website for the opportunities – something for everyone!
- Prayerfully talk about the summer plans for your group. Heart to Home editions conclude at the end of June – but your group can continue to meet – how can we help?
- Spend time as a group in Eucharistic Adoration – prayer for our shepherds in the Church

If you want a message of love to be heard it has got to be sent.

If you want a lamp to keep on burning you've got to keep putting oil into it.

(Saint Mother Teresa).

- Look for people this week that God might be saying - pray for them, witness to them.



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VBS/Camp Brebeuf/Steubenville 2017

Our parish is blessed with an outstanding Children's Ministry which attracts over 100 children each Lord's Day at our 9:30am and 11:30am Masses and each year welcome almost 50 to be part of VBS (July 10-14). We also have a great Youth Ministry program – Kids Klub (Grade 5-8) and Da Crew (Grade 9-12). A highlight event each summer for our Kids Klub is "Adventure Day at Camp Brebeuf" on July 6th and for our high-schoolers the Steubenville Conference from July 28-30. Is there a way that you could help Shepherd some of our young people in these events as a small group? :

- Could you be a prayer partner for our teens?
- Could you consider as a group sponsoring a child(ren) (\$35 for VBS, \$25 for Adventure Day, \$200 for Steubenville or even all three for \$260)?
- Could you consider inviting a teen to be part of our Youth Ministry or pass on the word about our amazing Children's Ministry

Let us pray (together)

*You have redeemed us, O God,
in Christ your Son, who was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit. In answer to
Christ's prayer, give us another Advocate to be with us always, the Spirit of truth,
so that in the joy that comes from you, may we always be ready to give a reason for the hope that
is in us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever. Amen.*

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