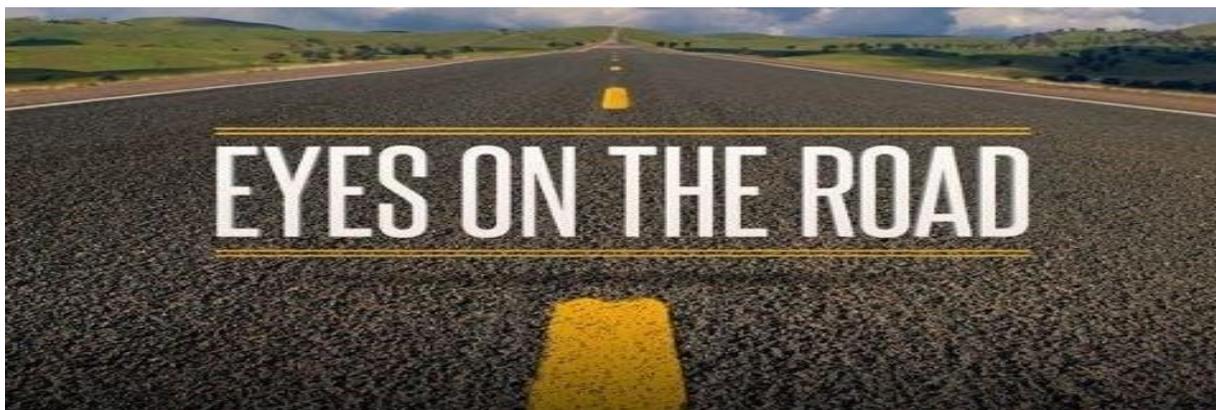




SMALL GROUP NEWSLETTER
ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION PARISH
CAMBRIDGE, (H) ONT.

ASCENSION OF THE LORD
May 28, 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."

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.

Then we were 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. But don't forget 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.

Last week we heard that we are not orphans, that Christ is with us always, accompanying us on the road. So, [check out the messages](#) and bring a friend this Lord's Day to Mass

Warm Up Activity:



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

The feast we celebrate this Sunday may have appeared to the apostles as the end. Losing Jesus on Calvary and losing Him again at the Ascension may have been a source of anxiety and despondency. But it was not an end, rather the blossoming of an ongoing process. Discuss together a moment in your experience, when it seemed “like an end”, but rather it proved to be a new beginning

CALL TO PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

Leader: Let us turn to the Lord for guidance and strength

Lord Jesus, you have called us to be your disciples and to listen to your Word, **Lord have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you send us the Holy Spirit, a source of grace and inspiration, **Christ have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you send us out as your apostles to share your Good News, **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 (Acts 1:1-11)

In the first book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus did and taught from the beginning until the day when he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles, who he has chosen. After his suffering he presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. “This”, he said, “is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom of Israel?” He replied, “It is not for you to know the time or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem; in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?



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

This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go to heaven.”

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

SECOND READING (Ephesians 1:17-23)

Brothers and sisters: I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of the heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.

God put this power in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come.

And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

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

GOSPEL (Matthew 28:16-20)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

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

If we take seriously the words of Jesus in the Gospel—His mandate sending us forth to continue His mission—we may be filled with many emotions: fear, excitement, doubt, joy, panic, hope, etc. If we take His words seriously, we cannot help but feel a great deal of solemn responsibility being entrusted to us. It really is in our hands now! He is leaving us, but not leaving us idle. Just



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

the opposite! He is giving us the tremendous responsibility which calls us into action. This is epitomized in the words of the Entrance Antiphon (Acts of the Apostles 1:11), “Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens? This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, alleluia”. Here the angel reminds the apostles that it is now in their hands. Enough with looking up into heaven! Get to it – the mission of Jesus Christ! This mandate is also ours, here and now.

Pope Francis stated, “Don’t forget this! The Ascension of Jesus into heaven acquaints us with this deeply consoling reality on our journey: in Christ, true God and true man, our humanity was taken to God. Christ opened the path to us. He is like a roped guide climbing a mountain who, on reaching the summit, pulls us up to Him and leads us to God. If we entrust our life to Him, if we let ourselves be guided by Him, we are certain to be in safe hands, in the hands of our Saviour, of our Advocate.

Therefore what we are about is not just to admire Jesus (like a fan club), but to resemble Jesus (like faith filled Disciples). That Jesus has chosen us to reflect or mirror who He is to our world and that this done best not by winning people over with persuasion that we are right, but by the uniqueness of who we are in action and deed that models a discipleship of truth.

Very often we use the words ‘disciple’ and ‘apostle’ interchangeably, without realizing the important distinction between them. A ‘disciple’ is one who listens, one seated at the feet of the master. This is the ancient Greco-Roman model of discipleship. The disciple is like a sponge who takes in all that the master offers, to think, reason, speak and act like the master. The disciple follows a certain discipline in order to be faithful to the master. However, we cannot remain as disciples sitting forever in a comfortable pew. We are called to be apostles! An ‘apostle’ is one who is sent, who goes out and shares what they have heard, seen, and experienced at the feet of the master. We eventually need to take the step and – like those “Men of Galilee” – stop looking up and be transformed into people of action, bearing witness to Him by what we say and do. It really is in our hands now as we keep our eyes 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)

(Acts) “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven?”

- a) Do I procrastinate in doing the will of God? Why? What am I waiting for?
- b) Remembering that we are life-long learners, what have I learned from Jesus, and what is the most important thing (in my estimation) for me yet to discover?

(Matthew) “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...”

- a) What are concrete examples of my sharing in the life and mission of Jesus?
- b) Which gifts and talents have I discovered, and dedicated in a special way, to this?



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

c) What gifts and talents do I hope to attain, through the grace of God, which will help me to be ever more graced to “go ... and make disciples of all nations”?

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.

Discuss your group’s involvement in Service Saturday this past week? How did it go?

Intercessions:

Leader: Our response: Lord Hear us

- 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 received 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 the young people of our parish preparing to go to Steubenville this summer and those who will participate at Camp Brebeuf. 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?



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

- Take time each evening to review your day and discover how you have been an instrument of the life and ministry of Jesus during the day – how you have been His ‘hands’, His ‘feet’, His ‘eyes’, His ‘voice’, His ‘heart’. And it might also be productive to identify moments when we were more of an obstacle than an instrument.
- 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

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)

*Grant, we pray, O Lord, that Christian hope may draw us onward
to where our nature is united with You. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Heart to Home, copyright © 2017 by Father F. Freitas. It is **copyrighted and cannot be published without permission of the author**. The Scripture version used in this commentary is the New Revised Standard Version