

Day One: Sunday September 17<sup>th</sup>

*Vigil of Prayer*

St Joseph's Church, Lourdes

'Pilgrims of Hope'

Opening Hymn – The Servant Song

Wil you let me be your servant,  
Let me be as Christ to you;  
Pray that I may have the grace  
To let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,  
We are travellers on the road;  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you  
In the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
'til we've seen this journey through.

**Presider:** Tonight, is an opportunity to gather for a quiet time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament to thank the Lord for bringing us to this place. We are invited to come together to pray for one another as we prepare to begin our journey as 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

**Presider:** Come to us this night, O God

**ALL:** Come to us with light

**Presider:** Speak to us this night, O God

**ALL:** Speak to us your truth

**Presider:** Dwell with us this night, O God

**ALL:** Dwell with us in hope and in love.

**Presider:** Let us make time now to sit in comfort, to breathe deeply, to relax in the presence of God. The loving One, who made you, the One who moulded you, says this night: "Have no fear for I have redeemed you. I call you by name and you are mine." Let us keep silence in that thought.

**Reader introduces the Gospel**

Tonight, we will hear proclaimed the familiar story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. This story is a reminder to us that our God is not an intrusive God. Even though he knows the reason for the disappointment of those two people, he gives them time to be able to deeply fathom the sadness and maybe bitterness which has overcome them.

Out of this comes a confession that is a refrain in human existence. "We had hoped, but.... We had hoped, but..." (v. 21). How much sadness, how many defeats, how many failures there are

in the lives of every person! Deep down, we are all a little like those two disciples. How many times we have hoped in our lives. How many times we have felt like we were one step away from happiness only to find ourselves knocked to the ground, disappointed. But, Jesus walks with all people who, discouraged, walk with their heads hung low. And walking with them in a discreet manner, he is able to restore hope.

The secret of the road that leads to Emmaus is simply this: despite appearances to the contrary, we continue to be loved and God will never stop loving us. God will walk with us always, always, even in the most painful moments, even in the worst moments, even in moments of defeat. That is where the Lord is. And this is our hope. As we listen to the gospel being proclaimed let us go forward with this hope! Because he is beside us and walks with us. Always!

### The Gospel

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 recognised 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.

Hymn sung as Blessed Sacrament is brought to altar:  
O Sacrament most holy, O Sacrament divine,  
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine.

**Reflection – Be Silent, be Still**

Be silent. Be still.  
Alone. Empty  
Before your God.  
Say nothing.  
Ask nothing.  
Be silent. Be still.  
Let your God look upon you.  
That is all.  
God knows. God understands.  
God loves you  
With an enormous love,  
And only wants  
To look upon you  
With that love.  
Quiet. Still. Be.  
Let your God—  
Love you.

Silence

**Prayer of thanksgiving:**

As children of God, we celebrate the beauty and individual worth of all creation.  
We believe in God: who created each of us, who breathed into us our uniqueness, who  
delights in who we are and what we can still become.  
We believe in the love of God: who laughs with us in our joy, who cries with us in our pain,  
who wants all creation to seek peace, reconciliation and love for each other.  
God alone created us. We are not alone. God loves us. Nothing will separate us from the  
love of God. Amen

**Closing Hymn – Amazing Grace**

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind, but now I see.

'twas grace that taught my heart to fear;  
And grace my fears relived;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils and snares

I have already come;  
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will lead me home.

