

EASTER THURSDAY

Luke 24:35-48

FRIGHT, AGITATION AND DOUBT

We easily can take it for granted that the resurrection of Our Lord brought immediate joy to his disciples. For sure it was not properly accommodated in the first place. The emotions demonstrated in the Gospel reading of today speak volumes on the confusion brought about to the lives of his followers. When the risen Lord made an appearance among his disciples, they responded initially *'in a state of alarm and fright'*. The Risen Lord sees the need to calm them down: *'Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts?'* The response of the disciples was a initially a mixture of alarm, fright, agitation and doubt. It took time before they caught on with what had happened. Only after the Risen Lord had dealt with their emotions did they give way to joy and wonderment but even then, it is still said that *'Their joy was so great that they still could not believe it'*. The initial response of the disciples was so understandable. Whenever something happens to us that is beyond our normal human experience, we tend to register those same emotions of fright, agitation and doubt. The appearance of the Risen Lord after his death was a phenomenon completely beyond the disciples' day to day horizon. It is an earth-shattering event that breaks apart our routine expectations. We can easily understand the Lord's death easier than his resurrection. Death is part of our normal human experience. In raising Jesus from the dead, God is giving us a glimpse of another world beyond the world of our experience. He is giving a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven. Jesus did not return to his normal human life; he was raised to a new quality of life, a sharing in God's own life, a life which is utterly different to our earthly life. It is not surprising that, when Jesus appeared to his disciples in this new form of life, their initial response was one of fear and confusion. Yet, very quickly, these emotions gave way to joy. In the end, the fruit of an encounter with the risen Lord is not alarm or agitation but joy. If we open ourselves to the presence of the risen Lord, we too will experience great joy, a joy this world cannot give, a joy that is a foretaste of the joy of the kingdom of heaven.