

Be Thou My Vision

Eleanor Hull/Mary E. Byrne (tr.)

Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom, and be Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.

Riches I heed not nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven, my victory is won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.



We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Old Orchard Church

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2013 — 10:15-11:50 a.m.

Christ at Emmaus by Rembrandt (1634)

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets,
he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures
the things concerning himself.*

Luke 24:27

*Celebrating the Immortal Jesus as the
Resurrection Community of
Suffering and Persecution*

Raised from a corruptible body to an indestructible life,
Jesus Christ now invites his followers
To share not only in his resurrection power
But also in his crucifixion weakness.
O great privilege—
To suffer in solidarity with the Suffering Servant,
Even on this side of the empty tomb!

Afflicted but not crushed,
Perplexed but not despairing
Persecuted but not broken,
Struck down but not destroyed.
We carry within us the dying of Jesus,
That his exquisite life may be seen
To animate our broken bodies till he comes again!

Dying, we live;
Suffering, together, we triumph.
Alleluia!



Today's Scripture

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13-35

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 60:1-2; 14-22

Today's Sermon

“What Is Christian Humility?”

1 Peter 5:1-11

*Hans Bayer. Professor of New Testament at Covenant Seminary,
preaching*

The Resurrection and Fear

Facing a firing squad is a pretty good test, I guess of your theology of death. I didn't exactly pass the test with flying colors. Perhaps it all just happened too quickly, without any warning. There had been a revolt of the prisoners at Camp 5 in Norilsk, and when troops were called in to put down the revolt they divided the prisoners up into small groups and marched them off. I was rounded up in a group of thirty, one of the first groups herded out of the camp and led down to a sandpit about a mile away. We had no idea what disciplinary measures would be taken against us, but we never for a moment thought we would see the soldiers line up five yards in front of us with rifles ready, waiting only for the command to shoot. The command was given, the rifles raised, cocked on another command, and leveled at our heads. For a moment, as if in a dream, none of us really understood what was happening. Then the realization that we were actually looking into gun barrels awaiting only the command to fire came crashing into my consciousness with a force that stopped everything. My stomach turned once and went numb; my head stopped; I'm sure I forgot to breathe; I couldn't move a muscle in my body; my mind went blank....

I have no idea how long that one moment lasted. Suddenly there was a shot in the distance, shouts, and a group of officers dashed out to stop our execution. All I know is that when the moment passed, my heart was pounding, every nerve and muscle shaking, my knees weak and trembling, my mind once again able to follow the sequence of events in a coherent way....

The thought of death itself does not terrify me, had not terrified me all through the war, or prison, or the prison camps....If the good news of Christianity is anything, it is this: that death has no hidden terror, has no mystery; is not something we must fear. It is not the end of life, of the soul, of the person. Christ's death on Calvary was not in itself the central act of salvation, but his death *and* resurrection; it was the resurrection that completed his victory over sin and death, the heritage of humankind's original sin that made a Redeemer and redemption necessary. This was the “good news” of salvation, meant to remove our last doubts, last fears, about the nature of death....

From the fall of Adam, God had promised a Redeemer. From the day death came into the world, God has promised a conqueror of death. And the good news to be preached throughout the world was that the Redeemer had come, death had been conquered! This is the joy of Easter, this is the peace it brings. “**O foolish and slow of heart to believe,**” he said to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, “**ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and so entered into his glory?**” The victory of God's “anointed one,” the Messiah, was to be over the “kingdom” of death and of sin, but how could he triumph unless he first suffered death and then broke its chains? Easter was the victory, Easter was the “good news.” The peace of Easter is the peace that comes from knowing that the thing men had feared most—the end of life, annihilation, death—really holds no fear at all.

—Walter Cizsek (1904-1984)