



# Sunday Reflection

## Season of Easter

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew  
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 16 May 2021

# Easter 7

## Celebrating

# Ascension Day

Christ's ascension made spreading his message across the world possible. We meet to celebrate the work of our Saviour and to consider how we may continue to make Jesus known, both near and far.

### Reflection for this week's Gospel

**"Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures."** Luke 24:45

#### **An Illustration to set the scene**

Hallam Tennyson has been described as the first modern literary executor.

His father, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who died in 1892, led a rather chaotic life, and Hallam was determined to suppress any gossip.

In this he had much in common with many relations of famous poets and authors.

But, unlike those before him, he took firm control, publishing a popular edition of his father's work. He then donated his father's manuscripts and notebooks to Trinity College, Cambridge, but banned anyone from quoting from them or making copies of anything except "short notes".

He was determined to prevent scholars from making any analysis that did not fit with the view the family, particularly the late poet's wife, Emily, wanted to portray.

Since then, the question of how works of deceased writers are allowed to be used has been the source of many disputes.

T. S. Eliot, for example, was clear that no one was allowed to quote from any of his unpublished work, and he that did not want his poems set to music.

This makes Andrew Lloyd Weber's musical *Cats*, based on one of his poems, a triumph or disaster depending on your point of view.

## **Looking at the teaching of the Gospel**

In today's Gospel we hear the story of Jesus' last hours on earth. Of course, they are not conventional last hours.

Jesus, unlike anyone else, had already passed through death and had been resurrected.

The disciples must have wondered what was coming next and what their role might be.

In Luke's account the women go to the tomb and discover the extraordinary news, followed by Peter.

The story goes on to describe Jesus' appearance to two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Finally, in today's reading, Jesus appears again and opens their minds to understand the scriptures, telling them to stay in Jerusalem to wait for power from on high.

They follow him to Bethany where he ascends to heaven, leaving them to return to Jerusalem to wait.

We are told that they rejoice all the way.

Such rejoicing must have required tremendous faith, since their beloved friend had gone for ever.

Even before the Holy Spirit comes they are “on a high”.

Is it because of the wonderful and inspiring knowledge they gained when Jesus opened their minds to understand the scriptures?

The significance of this brief verse about opening the scriptures is often passed over in favour of the extraordinary effect of the Holy Spirit, who fills the disciples with power just a few days later.

### **How can we reflect on the application to our lives?**

The work of a literary executor is tricky.

Some want to follow the writer’s wishes to the letter.

Others feel that the wider world should be able to access the work that the writer wanted to keep private.

Choices a writer made may be deemed inappropriate as time progresses.

The executor may also be called upon to make decisions where the writer left no instructions and his or her views are unknown.

When Jesus opened the scriptures to the disciples they discovered what their role was to be.

Jesus made them, in a sense, his literary executors.

And what were they to do with this huge body of work – work that describes the story of salvation?

Far from wishing to limit its use, Jesus tells them to go out and tell the world.

There are no restrictions on it.

It sounds like a difficult task, but they do not have to carry it out alone.

The Holy Spirit is promised to give them power and guidance.

As we follow in the steps of the disciples, we have the same responsibility and the same Holy Spirit to guide us.

Our task is to learn from the scriptures we have been given and from our own experience of God. We are then to pass this knowledge and experience on to others.

Conventional literary executors often have a burdensome and difficult task.

They might wish they had the writer's spirit to guide them. For our task we have God's own Spirit to teach us.

Can we play our part in proclaiming God's truth to all the nations?

**"Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures." *Luke 24:45***

Please share your response to this reflection to [Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](mailto:Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk) – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst we cannot meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

**[www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk](http://www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk)**