



the only figure in the picture who knows exactly what is going on. His companions have just begun to grasp the magnitude of the moment; and the innkeeper, who perhaps represents those in the world who know nothing of the Christian story, is oblivious to it all.

Caravaggio's genius is not only in pinpointing, as he has, the height of the drama; it is also that he has included us in that drama. We, all of us, are the fourth person at the table; so stunningly has he painted not only the figures but also the food, that we feel we could almost reach into the painting and touch them. They are also life-sized, and both the man on the right and Christ himself, both with arms outstretched towards us, are welcoming us into the frame.

**OPEN TO THE MESSAGE**

Caravaggio, a man who lived a complicated and certainly not saintly life, is never closer to the message of the Gospels as in this work. It was painted at the precise juncture when he was being transformed from an unknown jobbing artist into one of the greatest painters the world has ever seen; on the cusp of fame, this was the painting he chose to create. We cannot all be perfect but we can all be open to the message of Christ. We can be present, and we can allow ourselves to be welcomed and to ponder on the enormous significance of the resurrection and all it means for us.

**Mass text**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;  
O sing to the glory of his name.  
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.**

FIRST READING Acts 2:14. 22-33

PSALM Psalm 15

RESPONSE **Show us, Lord, the path of life.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.  
I say to the Lord: "You are my God.  
O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;  
it is you yourself who are my prize." **R.**
2. I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel,  
who even at night directs my heart.  
I keep the Lord ever in my sight:  
since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm. **R.**
3. And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;  
even my body shall rest in safety.  
For you will not leave my soul among the dead,  
nor let your beloved know decay. **R.**

4. You will show me the path of life,  
the fullness of joy in your presence,  
at your right hand happiness for ever. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Peter 1:17-21

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.  
Make our hearts burn within us as you talk to us.  
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Luke 24:13-35

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**The disciples recognised the Lord Jesus  
in the breaking of the bread, alleluia.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**

Acts 2:14. 36-41  
1 Peter 2:20-25  
John 10:1-10



www.rpbooks.co.uk @redemptorist rp@rpbooks.co.uk

**CARAVAGGIO, SUPPER AT EMMAUS**

More than anything else, Caravaggio was a painter who recognised drama; and that is nowhere better shown than in this painting, *Supper at Emmaus*. The work, which hangs in the National Gallery in London, shows four male figures around a table. It is cloth-covered, and on it rests a rather wonderful-looking feast; a delicious chicken ready to be carved, bread and a bowl of enticing fruit. Three of the men – the dinner guests – are seated; another, the innkeeper, is standing to one side, probably wanting to take good care of these three travellers who have chanced upon his hostelry for an evening meal; he is no doubt asking them whether everything is alright, before leaving them to get on with their feast.

But at the precise moment when the innkeeper has come to check on his guests, a stunning revelation has occurred at the table. Two of the men, the two ranged at either end, and so sideways on to us, had earlier chanced upon the third man on the road; they have walked together for hours, and presumably passed some pleasant conversation. These two men, disciples of the recently crucified Christ, have no reason to suspect that they have met their new acquaintance before – but he seems a good chap, and they are happy to be spending the evening with him.

The moment of revelation has come with the arrival of the food, and specifically the bread. Because the third man has just stretched out his hand to bless it; and in that instant, his two companions have recognised who he is. It is Jesus; the resurrected Jesus. They are stunned; they can hardly comprehend what they are seeing. One of them has furrowed his brow and is raising his eyebrows to the heavens; he is pushing his chair backwards in total surprise. The other man is stretching out both his arms in a gesture both of shock and of welcome; in the second he realises it is Christ, he also knows how delighted he is that it is Christ, and wants immediately to show his joy.

The central figure – Jesus Christ – appears serene, calm and in complete control. The light – always crucial to a Caravaggio creation – is slicing across the painting to illuminate the left side of his face. Christ, whom the artist has painted as beardless, probably to differentiate him from the pre-crucifixion Christ, is

**Divine images**



Joanna Moorhead continues this series looking at religious art.



**26 APRIL 2020**

3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III