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11 THURSDAY

Thursday, Week 4 of Easter

Acts 13: 13 – 25  
Ps 88: 2-3, 21-22, 25, 27  
John 13: 16 - 20

A striking thing in the gospel accounts of the risen Jesus is how His closest friends at first failed to recognise Him when He appeared. They thought He was a ghost, a gardener, a shore-side fisherman, a stranger walking to a village near Jerusalem. Once they recognised Him they were, of course, overjoyed and welcoming. At the Last Supper, Jesus had said: "Whoever welcomes the one I send welcomes me". If I can't seem to recognise the Lord in my ordinary life, is it simply because I don't recognise people sent by Him. Like the prophets, such people are not accepted in their own country, their own milieu, their own families ---- just as, in the gospels, unbelievers said about Jesus: "but He's just the carpenter's son, we know His parents and family". We like to think we know how God should act, and which are the people He sends. Of course we want to welcome Jesus, but how can we do so if we fail to recognise Him in accepting the people He sends? It's maybe easier to recognise Him in the person of a Mother Teresa or a John-Paul II; but what about my next-door neighbour, my family members, the people that come into my life as long-term friends or maybe as just brief acquaintances? the one with the irritating voice, or boring conversation, the one who's always complaining or criticising, the one who makes me feel inferior or incompetent? and people in need or trouble of any kind? Give me, Lord, the vision and wisdom to welcome those you send, and so to welcome You, especially in people in whom I don't immediately recognise you or expect to find you.

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