

**Easter 3 (Year B)  
Whitkirk - 8.30am  
30<sup>th</sup> April 2006**

If you are anything like me, there is a strong chance that you hear reports like our gospel reading (Luke 24:26b-48) and go off on a tangent, missing the real point.

So what is broiled fish? Can you buy it at Sainsbury's and would it be worth trying for a change for tea on Friday night? Broiling involves cleaning the fish, seasoning it and placing it in a shallow baking dish. White wine or water is poured to half the height of the fish. It is boiled, basting as you go and then roasted. That is broiling.

But does that tell us anything at all of significance about the resurrection? Broiled fish implies that someone is trying to get life back to normal. They have taken the trouble to prepare it with care. The disciples are distraught and someone has kicked into comforting mode. "I'll make them something nice, that will make them feel a bit better". Broiled fish: this isn't just barbecued or slung on the fire, but cooked with a bit of extra effort.

In the middle of this tension between grief and life goes on, two people burst in and start telling them about encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus. It must be getting late by now, but they still hot foot it round and start burbling some weird story about Jesus being alive. They are still telling their news when Jesus appears and gives them a greeting of 'peace'. The weird just entered a whole new level.

That new level lies in the other subtle details. This is not just Jesus having come back to life as he was, but something completely new has begun. He is at home both in the human world and also in the realm of heaven. He can eat broiled fish and yet also just appear and disappear at will. This isn't normal, well not to us.

It is as if in the resurrection of Jesus we see the convergence of two dimensions: the heavenly and the earthly. The broiled fish very much belong to the earthly and their presence in this story provides a key to seeing these two dimensions made manifest for us. The resurrection is not just something that we can keep at a safe distance in another dimension, but it bursts into our own dimension and leaves us suitably disrupted and disturbed in the process. Heaven and earth meeting blurs boundaries and therefore shakes us up.

If we are going to live the resurrection life then we need to be in tune with these two dimensions. Part of our focus needs to be where we are - broiling fish and making an effort. Part of our focus needs to be in the new reality which is beyond our imagining, but whose transforming power opens out before us and disturbs us.

Ian Black