



Encountering Christ
Prayerfully preparing for the
Sunday Mass and praying in
particular for our school families



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 4th April 2021 - Easter Sunday

1 Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for 4th April 2021 (John 20:1-9): The Empty Tomb

It was very early on the first day of the week and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been moved away from the tomb and came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved. "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb," she said, "and we don't know where they have put him." So Peter set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together, but the other disciple, running faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he bent down and saw the linen cloths lying on the ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who was following now came up, went right into the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground, and also the cloth that had been over his head; this was not with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment they had failed to understand the teaching of scripture, that he must rise from the dead.



3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

There are several accounts in the various gospels of the discovery of the empty tomb. The slight variations between them show all the marks of oral tradition, for in genuine oral tradition each 'performance' is different. Different people tell the story slightly differently, stressing different aspects. This story stresses the proof that the tomb really was empty, for the apostles examine the evidence carefully. Other accounts concentrate less on the evidence and more on the message, that they will meet the Risen Lord in Galilee. It was important to establish that the tomb was empty, to prevent the charge that the meetings with the Risen Christ were simply ghost-appearances. Apart from the proof that this was a real, living and bodily person, these meetings emphasise two factors, the power of the Risen Christ and the commission given to the disciples. The disciples are to go out into the whole world and spread the message, always accompanied and strengthened by Christ himself. In this account Simon Peter is clearly the senior, authority figure, to whom the Beloved Disciple defers. But it is the love of the Beloved Disciple which brings him to faith.

What aspects of the gospel accounts of the resurrection help to strengthen your own faith?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 4th April 2021



First Reading: *Peter Instructs Cornelius*

Acts 10:34.37-43

Peter addressed Cornelius and his household: "You must have heard about the recent happenings in Judaea; about Jesus of Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after John had been preaching baptism. God had anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and because God was with him, Jesus went about doing good and curing all who had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I, and those with me, can witness to everything he did throughout the countryside of Judaea and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact that they killed him by hanging him on a tree, yet three days afterwards God raised him to life and allowed him to be seen, not by the whole people but only by certain witnesses God had chosen beforehand. Now we are those witnesses - we have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection from the dead - and he has ordered us to proclaim this to his people and to tell them that God has appointed him to judge everyone, alive or dead. It is to him that all the prophets bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus will have their sins forgiven through his name."

Peter was speaking to Cornelius. Cornelius was the Roman centurion who already revered God and had had a vision that he should invite Peter to come and instruct him. Peter shows that Jesus was a real human being. He went about bringing God's peace to everyone he could meet. Nevertheless, he was executed as a criminal. But then he was raised from death to a life that was totally new. This was the fulfilment of all the promises made to Israel, bringing to completion God's plan in creation. Life moved into a new gear. Peter expresses this when he says that God has appointed the Risen Jesus to judge the living and the dead. The Jews expected that at the end of time, at the completion of all things, God would come to set everything to rights, to judge things according to their true worth. Now Peter says that Jesus is the one who will be this judge. Jesus is the Lord who will bring all things to completion and to judgment. By his rising from the dead Jesus has supreme authority over the whole world. Paul put it in this way: he said that Jesus was 'constituted Son of God in power' by the resurrection.

How can we be more effective witnesses to the Risen Lord?

Second Reading: *New Life in Christ*

Colossians 3:1-4

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed - and he is your life - you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

This reading is the visible tip of an iceberg, of which much more lies below the surface! Paul here tells us that all our interest must be in heavenly things, the things of Christ, because we share Christ's life. What is more, that life is no ordinary life. What does all this mean? We share Christ's life because faith in Christ means that we put all our trust and hope in him. We have been baptised into Christ; that is, by baptism we have been dipped into Christ as into a river, and come up soaked with or dripping with Christ. I am growing into Christ; I share in his inheritance, his status as Son of God. The wellspring of my life is no longer the ordinary, natural life which enables me to live, breathe, digest, feel, see, sing and play, love and hate. It is the Spirit of Christ which spurs me to generosity, service, kindness, self-control, peace and openness. This life, says Paul, is still hidden, and will be fully manifested only at the coming of Christ. But if I am to be true to my profession of faith in baptism, the principles on which I operate must be those of this risen life of Christ.

How can we be most true to our profession of faith at baptism?

**“I am growing into Christ;
I share his inheritance.”**

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*
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