



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 15th April 2018 - The Third Sunday of Easter

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 15th April 2018 (Luke 24:35-48): Fish for Supper

The disciples told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread when Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" In a state of alarm and fright, they thought they were seeing a ghost. But he said, "Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have." And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet. Their joy was so great that they could not believe it, and they stood dumbfounded; so he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they offered him a piece of grilled fish, which he took and ate before their eyes. Then he told them, "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, has to be fulfilled." He then opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this."



3 Reflect

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

The two disciples had met Jesus on their way to Emmaus. There Jesus had used the Eucharistic meal to reveal himself to them, for the Eucharist is always an occasion for us to get to know the Risen Christ better. Now he meets the whole group of disciples in their refuge, the Upper Room. It is perhaps an account of the same incident that we heard last Sunday, but with different emphasis. Now the stress is on the meeting with a real person, and not with a ghost. That is why Jesus eats a piece of fish. The important lesson of this is that, in our resurrection to true life, it is the whole person that is raised, not just the soul. Christian teaching is that a person is an animated body. We work out our salvation with fingers and toes and other bodily members, and all will be raised to life. It is not just a matter of thoughts and intentions! The whole body is baptised into Christ and is the instrument of our salvation. The body will be changed, and St Paul reminds us that we should not get bogged down with worrying about what sort of body we will have at the resurrection, but rejoice that each of us will be raised as a whole person.

What do you imagine the risen life to be like? Is love, friendship and companionship part of this?

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.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 15th April 2018



First Reading: *Peter's Speech to the People of Jerusalem*

Acts 3:13-15. 17-19

Peter said to the people, "You are Israelites, and it is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, who has glorified his servant Jesus, the same Jesus you handed over and then disowned in the presence of Pilate, after Pilate had decided to release him. It was you who accused the Holy One, the Just One, you who demanded the reprieve of a murderer while you killed the prince of life. God, however, raised him from the dead, and to that fact we are the witnesses. Now I know, brothers, that neither you nor your leaders had any idea what you were really doing; this was the way God carried out what he had foretold, when he said through all his prophets that his Christ would suffer. Now you must repent and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out."

This reading is the final section of Peter's speech to the people of Jerusalem after Pentecost, when he is explaining to the crowds the significance of the first miracle worked by the apostles in the power of the Spirit. Like all the speeches in Acts, it is not a word-for-word, tape-recorded report, but is a sample of Peter's preaching to the people. He lays the blame for Jesus' rejection squarely on them, but shows that it was just as scripture had foretold. All of the speeches end with an invitation to repent. This does not mean simply to get all weepy about past sins, thinking 'how dreadful and wicked I have been'. It means that the listeners (and this includes us) must change our ways and adopt God's system of values (as fully revealed by the Risen Christ). To convert means that, whereas before I was going in one direction, now I turn round and go in another. Then the way I look at the world becomes different: I see things from a different angle – from God's, from Christ's angle. This sort of conversion does not so much look at the past with regret as look at the future with confidence. It is the new determination that allows God to wipe out our sins.

What does repentance mean to you? What are God's values, those values revealed in Christ?

Second Reading: *Our Advocate with the Father*

1 John 2:1-5

I am writing this, my children, to stop you sinning; but if anyone should sin, we have our advocate with the Father Jesus Christ, who is just; he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours, but the whole world's. We can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments. Anyone who says, 'I know him', and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, refusing to admit the truth. But when anyone does obey what he has said, God's love comes to perfection in him.

This second reading advances a step further beyond the first. The first is about conversion, the second about blotting out former failures. Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father, 'standing at the right hand of the Father', because he takes our sins away. How does he do this? By his act of obedience on the Cross, Jesus wipes out the disobedience of Adam, that is, of all humanity. Adam (which is the Hebrew word meaning 'man') is the figure of all humanity, and Adam's sin is the symbol of all human sin, a sort of 'prequel' of all sin, an act of turning away from God, of independence and disobedience. On the Cross, Jesus was perfectly united to the Father, in an act of utter obedience in love, to which the Father in love responds, with a renewal of love for all humanity. For us, too, it is true that if we know God, if we have any appreciation of God and any personal bond to God, we cannot but obey him. God's commands are not arbitrary, but are the way of keeping close to him. By the command of love God reveals himself and invites us to be like him.

Obedience is often understood as doing as we are told, as limiting our freedom. What is Christian obedience about and how would you explain this to somebody else?

“God's commands ... are a way of keeping close to him.”

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

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