



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 16th April 2023 - The Second 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 Sunday 16th April 2023 - The Peace of the Risen Christ (John 20:19-31)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you,' and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained.' Thomas, called the Twin, who was one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. When the disciples said, 'We have seen the Lord,' he answered, 'Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe.' Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you,' he said. Then he spoke to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; look, here are my hands. Give me your hand; put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe.' Thomas replied, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.' There were many other signs that Jesus worked and the disciples saw, but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name.

3 Reflect

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

This passage from John's Gospel has all the more significance because it brings the Gospel to a close. The story of the breakfast-party with the Risen Christ on the shore of the Lake of Galilee is a sort of appendix. The story-line of the main Gospel ends with Thomas blurting out 'My Lord and my God'. The Gospel therefore ends as it began, with the only two unmistakable declarations in the New Testament of the divinity of Jesus. 'The Word was God' and 'My Lord and my God' bracket the Gospel, indicating the purpose and angle of the whole Gospel which is to show that Jesus is God. John's Gospel complements the other Gospels: they show a man who is also God, whereas this Gospel shows God who is also a man. It is with the divine authority that Jesus confers on his Church the divine power to forgive. Real forgiveness is indeed Godlike. It is not simply 'forgive-and-forget', but forgiveness in the knowledge that a hurt has occurred. Just as a bone, broken and merged together again, can be stronger than it was before it was broken, so forgiveness can create a real link of love on both sides, a treasured secret of divine graciousness between forgiver and forgiven.

How have you experienced real forgiveness in your life?

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 16th April 2023



First Reading: *A Community of Peace*

Acts of the Apostles 2:42-47

The whole community remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers. The many miracles and signs worked through the apostles made a deep impression on everyone. The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common: they sold their goods and possessions and shared out the proceeds among themselves according to what each one needed. They went as a body to the Temple every day but met in their houses for the breaking of bread; they shared their food gladly and generously; they praised God and were looked up to by everyone. Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved.

The first readings throughout Easter time this year are about the earliest community of the followers of Jesus at Jerusalem (before they had acquired the name 'Christians'). Luke is the author of this history of the earliest spread of the Christian message which we call 'The Acts of the Apostles': from time to time he gives a summary of these earliest 'Christians'. This passage is the first of these summaries, placed just after the birth of the Church at Pentecost. It paints a picture of peace, generosity and devotion, summed up in grateful praise of God. Luke is showing us the quality of a community where the Spirit of God is given free play; he is giving us an ideal to strive for. It is a community to which anyone would wish to belong, a community where love prevails, where each member is attentive to the needs of others. It is not then surprising that the number in the community was constantly on the increase. Perhaps, as in any community we experience, there were tensions beneath the surface, but the warmth of trust in the Lord breathes through the account and promises a solution to every problem.

How may we be more truly a community in Christ?

Second Reading: *A Sure Hope*

1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his great mercy has given us a new birth as his sons, by raising Jesus Christ from the dead, so that we have a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens. Through your faith, God's power will guard you until the salvation which had been prepared is revealed at the end of time. This is a cause of great joy for you, even though you may for a short time have to bear being plagued by all sorts of trials; so that, when Jesus Christ is revealed, your faith will have been tested and proved like gold - only it is more precious than gold, which is corruptible even though it bears testing by fire - and then you will have praise and glory and honour. You did not see him, yet you love him; and still without seeing him, you are already filled with a joy so glorious that it cannot be described, because you believe; and you are sure of the end to which your faith looks forward, that is, the salvation of your souls.

Throughout the Easter season this year we read this First Letter of Peter. Whether it was actually written by the fisherman, the enthusiastic and impetuous leader of the Twelve, or simply attributed to him, is still discussed by scholars. The answer makes little difference to the positive message of the Letter, which is full of the optimism of the new Christian movement, the love, confidence and joy of looking forward to the promised inheritance. Traditionally, the Easter Vigil is the time for new baptisms, and so new births into the Church. Even if we were baptised long ago, we can still benefit from the celebration of the season to refresh our newness in Christ. New birth into Christ brings with it the promise of inheritance into eternal life. Just as an earthly inheritance can change a whole situation and way of life, even a change of personality, so does our entry into Christ. Of course, baptism brings with it responsibilities and duties, and the reading mentions the trials which test us like gold. I know that I, for one, still have a lot of dross which needs to be purged away before I can stand before the Lord and, in his name, claim my inheritance as a son of God.

What joys and responsibilities does baptism give me?

“New birth into Christ brings with it the promise of inheritance into eternal life.”

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

w: www.wednesdayword.org

e: info@wednesdayword.org