



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 5th May 2019 - 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 Sunday 5th May 2019 - Jesus Meets his Disciples at the Lake (John 21:1-19)

Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias, and it happened like this: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two more of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We'll come with you." They went out and got into the boat but caught nothing that night. It was light by now and there stood Jesus on the shore, though the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. Jesus called out, "Have you caught anything, friends?" And when they answered, "No", he said, "Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something." So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in. The disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." At these words 'It is the Lord', Simon Peter, who had practically nothing on, wrapped his cloak round him and jumped into the water. The other disciples came on in the boat, towing the net and the fish; they were only about a hundred yards from land. As soon as they came ashore they saw that there was some bread there, and a charcoal fire with fish cooking on it. Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore, full of big fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them; and in spite of there being so many the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples was bold enough to ask, 'Who are you?'; they knew quite well it was the Lord. Jesus then stepped forward, took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to the disciples after rising from the dead. After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?" He answered, "Yes Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Look after my sheep." Then he said to him a third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was upset that he asked him the third time 'Do you love me?' and said, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. I tell you most solemnly, when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you liked; but when you grow old you will stretch out your hands, and somebody else will put a belt round you and take you where you would rather not go." In these words he indicated the kind of death by which Peter would give glory to God. After this he said, "Follow me."

3 Reflect

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

This epilogue to the Gospel of John shows an extraordinary link with Luke's version of the Call of the Disciples: the same unsuccessful fishing all night transformed into success at Jesus' command, and then the commission to proclaim the Gospel. As in so many encounters with the risen Christ, he is an awesome figure, the same person but mysteriously changed, so that the disciples have difficulty recognising him. In addition, here in John's Gospel, we have the touching scene of Peter's restoration: a triple declaration of love and loyalty is extorted from Peter to compensate for his triple denial, and a triple commission is given to him, concluding with the repeat of his call, 'Follow me' – as the prophecy of his martyrdom still echoes in his ears. While Matthew's Gospel concludes with a promise that the risen Christ will be always with his Church, this Gospel illustrates what this will look like in practice: Jesus feeds his followers at the picnic breakfast. Why the 153 fish? For the Venerable Bede it is too obvious: put together the numbers from 1 to 16, to this add 10 for the commandments and 7 for the days of creation, and you get 153. There may be more to it than that!

Is Peter's protestation of love after his denial an example to us (to turn back to the Lord and away from sin)? How can I become more aware of Christ's presence – particularly in the Eucharist, and so in each other?

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 5th May 2019



First Reading: *The Apostles in the Dock*

Acts 5:27-32. 40-41

The high priest demanded an explanation of the apostles. "We gave you a formal warning," he said, "not to preach in this name, and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and seem determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us." In reply Peter and the apostles said, "Obedience to God comes before obedience to men; it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you who had him executed by hanging on a tree. By his own right hand God has now raised him up to be leader and saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins through him to Israel. We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him." They warned the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. And so they left the presence of the Sanhedrin glad to have had the honour of suffering humiliation for the sake of the name.

By the time this hearing before the Sanhedrin (the supreme Jewish Council in Jerusalem) occurs, the apostles have already been arrested twice for proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. The first time only Peter and John were arrested, interrogated and given a warning. Now it seems to be a whole group of the apostles. They were arrested, delivered from prison by an angel – another sign that God looks after his own people - and voluntarily went to face the Sanhedrin. The task of the apostle is first and foremost to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus and his new life, a positive message of encouragement. Is our message of Christianity to those whom we meet always a message of encouragement? Does it always set out to inspire new life? All the way through the Acts of the Apostles we see the interplay of the harassment of Christ's messengers and God's protection of them. Peter is arrested and is about to be executed when he is delivered from prison by an angel. Later on, Paul is imprisoned and delivered from prison by an earthquake. It is no surprise that the same harassment, mockery and persecution continue throughout the history of the Church.

What sort of hardships do I endure for the sake of Christ?

Second Reading: *The Lamb in Glory*

Revelation 5:11-14

In my vision, I, John, heard the sound of an immense number of angels gathered round the throne and the animals and the elders; there were ten thousand times ten thousand of them and thousands upon thousands, shouting, "The Lamb that was sacrificed is worthy to be given power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing." Then I heard all the living things in creation - everything that lives in the air, and on the ground, and under the ground, and in the sea, crying, "To the One who is sitting on the throne and to the Lamb, be all praise, honour, glory and power, for ever and ever." And the four animals said, "Amen"; and the elders prostrated themselves to worship.

“The risen Christ -
fully equal to the Father.”

This second reading (from Revelation) shows us a scene in the heavenly throne-room, the Lamb sacrificed enthroned. In fact this is the second half of the scene, the first half of which describes God enthroned in glory. Now we see the triumphant Lamb on the same throne, being accorded the same honours by the 24 elders and by all living creatures as were earlier accorded to the LORD God. Note the sevenfold acclamation! Then there is a fourfold acclamation from the four animals, four-square, who (as in Ezekiel's vision of the divine throne) represent the solidity of the universe. The surest indication, already in the early Church, that the risen Christ was seen as fully equal to the Father is the equality of worship accorded to them both by the whole of creation. It is precisely as the sacrificed Lamb of God that Jesus enters into the sanctuary, seated on the throne of God and presenting the very sacrifice which we present in the Eucharist. There is no time in God, and this sacrifice is 'once and for all'. The sacrifice on our altars is no new sacrifice but is the sacrifice of obedience which Christ presents in permanence to his Father.

What implications does this scene of the enthronement of the Lamb have for the full and final reality of our lives?

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