



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2013 - 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 7<sup>th</sup> April 2013 (John 20:19-31): Jesus in the Upper Room**

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. 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."



**3** Reflect

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

*Two aspects of this meeting with the risen Jesus are especially striking. This is the last scene of the Gospel of John, for chapter 21 is an appendix. At the end, before the concluding reflection, Thomas gives the only direct acclamation in the New Testament of Jesus as God: nowhere else is Jesus hailed as 'God', though there are other ways in which his divinity has been indicated. So in a way Thomas' greeting of the risen Christ is the climax of the New Testament. Secondly, it is striking that Jesus' final blessing is one of peace and forgiveness. The mission of all Christians is to bring these gifts to a troubled world. Throughout the Bible God is a God of forgiveness. The Old Testament consists of a series of covenants, each in turn broken by God's chosen people, but then re-created by a forgiving God. There was the covenant with Noah after the Flood, the covenant with Abraham, the covenant with Moses after the worship of the Golden Calf, and finally the new covenant is promised by Jeremiah after unfaithful Israel had been exiled to Babylon. Christianity is not for the perfect but for the sinner, who is surrounded by other sinners. As forgiven sinners we are exhorted to bring forgiveness to all those around them.*

**How, as a forgiven sinner and part of a community of forgiven sinners, do I demonstrate the power of God's forgiveness?**

**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 7<sup>th</sup> April 2013



## First Reading: *The Early Community*

### Acts 5:12-16

The faithful all used to meet by common consent in the Portico of Solomon. No one else ever dared to join them, but the people were loud in their praise and the numbers of men and women who came to believe in the Lord increased steadily. So many signs and wonders were worked among the people at the hands of the apostles that the sick were even taken out into the streets and laid on beds and sleeping-mats in the hope that at least the shadow of Peter might fall across some of them as he went past. People even came crowding in from the towns round about Jerusalem, bringing with them their sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and all of them were cured.

*Before he tells us of the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth, St Luke (the author of the Acts of the Apostles), describes the ideal community in Jerusalem. He stresses the unity of this community, their prayer together, their common ownership of all their possessions, their generosity to those in need, and their steadfastness under persecution by the authorities who refused to accept their message. It is the model for any Christian community, which all our Christian communities need to strive to imitate and become real centres of the love and confidence of Christ. In today's reading St Luke tells how in the early community the same signs and wonders of healing which Jesus himself had worked are now worked by the apostles too, and especially by Peter. It is a theme throughout the Acts that the followers of Jesus, filled with his Spirit, continue his work and are alive with his life, expressing the power of the risen Christ, who remains with them always. St Luke also wants to underline that Jerusalem is being given a second chance: the people there had rejected Jesus, but now they have another opportunity to welcome him, this time at the hands of his apostles, the witnesses to his resurrection. This is why St Luke underlines that the numbers of believers increased steadily. But the martyrdom of Stephen will mark the end and the failure of this second chance.*

*What work of Christian healing can I do now?*

## Second Reading: *A Vision of the LORD Jesus Christ*

### Revelation 1:9-13. 17-19

My name is John, and through our union in Jesus I am your brother and share your sufferings, your kingdom, and all you endure. I was on the island of Patmos for having preached God's word and witnessed for Jesus; it was the Lord's day and the Spirit possessed me, and I heard a voice behind me, shouting like a trumpet, "Write down all that you see in a book." I turned round to see who had spoken to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands and, surrounded by them, a figure like a Son of Man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with a golden girdle. When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint at his feet, but he touched me with his right hand and said, "Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of the underworld. Now write down all that you see of present happenings and things that are still to come."

“The risen Christ will release her people from all sorrow and sadness.”

*The first reading during the season of Eastertide is about the beginnings of the Church; in Year C the second reading (taken from the Book of Revelation), is about the end and completion of the Church. This book, the last book of the Bible, was written to assure Christians, struggling under persecution from the Roman Empire, that the risen Christ would eventually bring his Church to triumph and release her people from all sorrow and sadness. It uses extravagant, cosmic imagery to emphasize God's total control of the universe, heaven and earth, and all that is in them. It is very imaginative, drawing heavily upon the imagery of the Old Testament and upon the symbolism of numbers. The narrator is the Apostle John, exiled to the Greek island of Patmos, and it begins with a vision of the risen Christ in all his glory. The phrase 'Son of Man' (used in this reading), was Jesus' favourite way of referring to himself. Here the 'Son of Man' is also reminiscent of the Son of Man in the prophet Daniel's vision; to him God gives all power over the universe. The seven lamp-stands (seven is the perfect number), represent the seven local Churches of Asia to whom the Book was primarily addressed.*

*This vision of Christ was written down to inspire and energize a real Christian community; can it help to inspire and energize mine?*

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