

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia.
You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
alleluia, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your
Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 10:34, 37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

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."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:

This day was made by the Lord;
we rejoice and are glad.

or

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.
Let the sons of Israel say:
"His love has no end." (R.)
2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed; his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds. (R.)
3. The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes. (R.)

SECOND READING Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alternative second reading

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

SEQUENCE

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.

The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;

and Christ, the undefiled,

hath sinners to his Father reconciled.

Death with life contended; combat strangely ended!

Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.
Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose;

I saw Christ's glory as he rose!

The angels there attesting;

shroud with grave-clothes resting.

Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee.

That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know.

Victorious king, thy mercy show!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed;
let us celebrate the feast then, in the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), through the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with him in newness of life. And so, now that our Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and his works and promised to serve God in the holy Catholic Church. And so I ask you:

Do you renounce Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty show?

I do.

Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

I do.

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us new birth by water and the Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins,
keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life.

Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord,
We offer the sacrifice by which your Church
is wondrously reborn and nourished.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed,
alleluia;

therefore let us keep the feast with the unleavened bread of purity and truth, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your Church, O God,
with unfailing love and favour,
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,
she may come to the glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

4 APRIL 2021

Sunday Message

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE
RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year B • Psalter Week 1

WHERE'S THE BODY?

(JOHN 20:1-9)

All four Gospel accounts mention Mary Magdalene as visiting the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning.

We might note that, in John's account, she does not report to the two male disciples that Jesus is risen from the dead, only that Jesus' body is missing. Simon Peter does not conclude that the resurrection has taken place after running to the grave of Jesus. The reason for this is that the empty tomb is no proof of anything: it can only tell us that "he is not here"; it cannot supply the reason for this situation. People come to believe that Jesus "is risen", apart from one exception, through an encounter with the risen Jesus or through an angel, a divine messenger, that is, through revelation, not from human deduction or hearsay.

The one exception is the anonymous other disciple, "the one Jesus loved", who does come to believe without any personal meeting with the risen Lord. What enabled him to perceive the true reason behind the scene in front of him was his relationship with Jesus: this individual has been highlighted in the second part of the Gospel, in which the self-giving love of Jesus for his disciples has been stressed and illustrated by his washing of the disciples' feet.

The mention of the linen burial cloths and head covering recalls the Johannine account of the raising of Lazarus, who came out of his tomb still wrapped in his funeral sheets and had to be released from them. The Fourth Evangelist is telling us that Lazarus was restored to the life he had lost: the resurrection of Jesus is of a different order altogether. ■

REFLECT

The male disciples of Jesus are often criticised or ridiculed for not believing the women when these female disciples tell them that Jesus is risen. However, the New Testament tells us that the testimony of the first disciples, on whose testimony belief in the resurrection of Jesus depends, is founded on "a personal experience of the risen Lord". Paul claims to be as much of an apostle as the likes of Peter on this very basis. The empty tomb is no proof, as we see from the Gospel narratives themselves: for example, Mary Magdalene will soon mistake the risen Jesus for the gardener and ask him what he might have done with the body. It is only when Jesus speaks her name that the joyful truth is revealed to her.

Those who enjoy detective stories will appreciate that the empty tomb is not a proof of the resurrection, but is in some ways a consequence of that event. The reason, according to the Christian scriptures, must come from divine revelation, from God: this is supplied either through angels or by the risen Jesus himself.

This means that each of us has to decide for her- or himself whether or not to believe in the resurrection: no one saw Jesus rise from the dead, despite the purely imaginative pictures in many stained-glass windows and illustrated Bibles. ■

SAY

The Lord is truly risen,
alleluia!

(from one of the Entrance
Antiphons of the Mass on Easter
Sunday)

DO

Today is the greatest feast in the Christian year: celebrate it accordingly!

LEARN

No one, including the soldiers on guard in Matthew's account, actually saw Jesus rise from the tomb.

"The disciple Jesus loved" is the figure at the source of the Johannine tradition and therefore of great importance in the Fourth Gospel.

Mary Magdalene is the only constant factor in the stories of the women's visit to the tomb of Jesus.



Mary Magdalene: detail from "Deposition of the Cross" (1927) by P. Verkade, in Carmelite Church, Dobling, Vienna

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Like newborn infants, you must long for the pure, spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

God of everlasting mercy, who in the very recurrence of the paschal feast kindle the faith of the people you have made your own, increase, we pray, the grace you have bestowed, that all may grasp and rightly understand in what font they have been washed, by whose Spirit they have been reborn, by whose Blood they have been redeemed. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 4:32-35

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common.

The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect.

None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.

or Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

- Let the sons of Israel say: "His love has no end."

Let the sons of Aaron say:

"His love has no end."

Let those who fear the Lord say: "His love has no end." (R.)

- The Lord's right hand has triumphed; his right hand raised me up. I shall not die, I shall live and recount his deeds. I was punished, I was punished by the Lord, but not doomed to die. (R.)

- The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes. This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 John 5:1-6

A reading from the first letter of St John.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and whoever loves the Father that begot him loves the child whom he begets.

We can be sure that we love God's children if we love God himself and do what he has commanded us; this is what loving God is – keeping his commandments; and his commandments are not difficult, because anyone who has been begotten by God

has already overcome the world; this is the victory over the world – our faith.

Who can overcome the world?

Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God; Jesus Christ who came by water and blood, not with water only, but with water and blood; with the Spirit as another witness – since the Spirit is the truth.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "You believe because you can see me.

Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe."

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

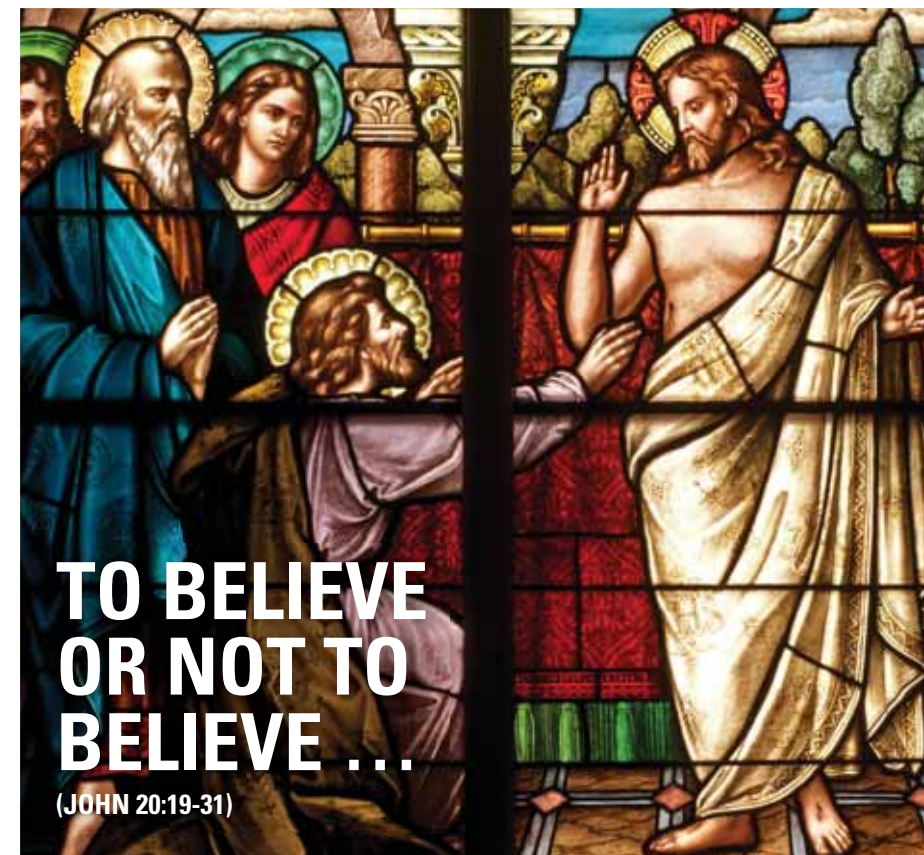
Accept, O Lord, we pray, the oblations of your people (and of those you have brought to new birth), that, renewed by confession of your name and by Baptism, they may attain unending happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails, and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that our reception of this paschal Sacrament may have a continuing effect in our minds and hearts. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE WORD

Stained glass window depicting Thomas' encounter with the risen Jesus

Our Gospel passage today relates two occasions when the disciples experience the risen Jesus among them. The first takes place on the evening of Easter Sunday, when Jesus had made himself known to Mary Magdalene. The setting has a negative tone, that of fear on the part of the disciples, fear which turns to joy as Jesus' promise that they would see him again is fulfilled.

One of the differences between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics is that, in John's account, the disciples have no part in Jesus' ministry. There are no "apostles", only "disciples". Jesus acts alone. Now, the risen Jesus commissions the disciples to carry on his work and bestows on them the Holy Spirit by breathing on them in a gesture reminiscent of the Lord God infusing the breath of life into the first human being. As well as bringing eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit empowers the disciples to forgive or retain sins, which will be part of their mission.

A week later, Thomas, the disciple who represents the sceptical point of view, encounters the risen Jesus for himself. Jesus challenges him to set aside his doubts about the testimony of the others by testing the reality of Jesus' wounds. Thomas does not actually touch Jesus' hands and side, but makes the supreme declaration of faith in Jesus as "My Lord and my God!"

The Gospel according to John ends with the statement often called "the Johannine Beatitude", with Jesus saying to Thomas, and therefore to all of us, whom Thomas represents, "Happy [Blessed] are those who have not seen and yet believe." ■

SAY

Blessed am I who have not seen and yet believe. (see John 20:29)

REFLECT

The main theme running through the Fourth Gospel is that of believing. In the various characters who appear in dialogue or meetings with Jesus, John presents us with different reactions to Jesus and his message. In our passage today, Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his mission of confronting people and bringing them to a point of crisis or decision as to whether they will believe or not. Jesus actually says to Thomas, "Do not be an unbelieving person, but a believing one". In the mission of passing on the good news, a positive decision will be expressed by the person being baptised and entering a new life with the risen Jesus, with their sins forgiven. A negative choice will result in not being baptised.

The celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation developed in the Church well after the writing of the Gospel accounts in response to difficult situations which affected the community as a whole. The practice of individual confession came later again. Although the forgiving or retaining of sins may suggest to us this familiar practice, we might bear in mind that the Gospel text refers to the decision of the person about accepting baptism. The disciples are not being given the power or the right to determine whether or not someone deserves to be absolved of their faults. It is the person who judges themselves by deciding to believe or not. ■

LEARN

The noun "faith" does not occur in the Fourth Gospel: the verb "to believe" is found nearly one hundred times:

Belief in Jesus is, therefore, not something we "possess", but something we "do" or "put into practice".

The individuals who appear in the Gospel according to John, such as Thomas, represent different types of people and their reaction to Jesus and his message.

DO

As you close your door in the evening, put yourself in the place of the disciples: be aware that the risen Lord is with you with his loving (not judgemental) presence.

18 APRIL 2021 Sunday Message

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cry out with joy to God, all the earth;
O sing to the glory of his name.
O render him glorious praise, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

May your people exult for ever, O God,
in renewed youthfulness of spirit,
so that, rejoicing now in the restored glory of
our adoption,
we may look forward in confident hope
to the rejoicing of the day of resurrection.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 3:13-15. 17-19

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
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."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 4

Response:
Lift up the light of your face on us, O Lord.
or
Alleluia!

1. When I call, answer me, O God of justice;
from anguish you released me, have
mercy and hear me! (R.)

- It is the Lord who grants favours to those
whom he loves;
the Lord hears me whenever I call him.
(R.)
- "What can bring us happiness?" many
say.
Lift up the light of your face on us,
O Lord. (R.)
- I will lie down in peace and sleep comes
at once,
for you alone, Lord, make me dwell in
safety. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 John 2:1-5

A reading from the first letter of St John.
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.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Lord Jesus, explain the scriptures to us.
Make our hearts burn within us as you talk
to us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Luke 24:35-48

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Luke.

The disciples told their story of what had
happened on the road and how they had
recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread.

They were still talking about this 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."
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the
Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

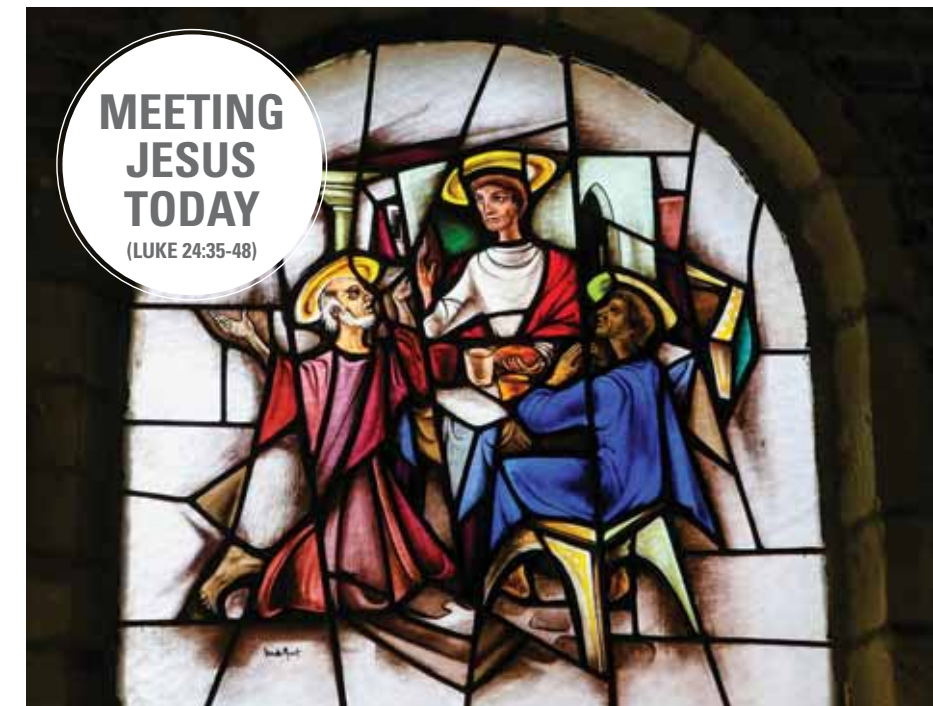
Receive, O Lord, we pray,
these offerings of your exultant Church,
and, as you have given her cause for such
great gladness,
grant also that the gifts we bring
may bear fruit in perpetual happiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Christ had to suffer and on the third day
rise from the dead;
in his name repentance and remission of sins
must be preached to all the nations, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look with kindness upon your people,
O Lord,
and grant, we pray,
that those you were pleased to renew by
eternal mysteries
may attain in their flesh
the incorruptible glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE WORD

Stained glass window in the fifteenth-century Elzenveld Chapel in Antwerp, Belgium, depicting Jesus and two disciples at Emmaus

Our Gospel passage follows the encounter of the two disciples with the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus and his making himself known to them in a setting with a Eucharistic background.

The episode today echoes last Sunday's reading from John, in which Jesus makes himself present to the group of disciples in Jerusalem. Cleopas and his possibly female companion have to return to the holy city, because that is the place where God's plan of redemption is to be worked out and, as yet, it is not completed: that will come with Pentecost.

The appearance of Jesus emphasises that he is the same person as was crucified and laid in the tomb. The detail that he ate the piece of grilled fish "before their eyes" is an indication that the disciples are authentic witnesses to the resurrection: it is the same Jesus whom they knew before the crucifixion, but now he is transformed; he is not a ghost or a resuscitated corpse. The mention of fish recalls the feeding of the five thousand, which has Eucharistic overtones.

The risen Jesus then "opened their minds to understand the scriptures", another Eucharistic allusion. The earlier Emmaus episode shows the importance of the Hebrew scriptures in making sense of the story of Jesus. Here the same message is reinforced, underlining that the paschal event is part of God's plan.

Luke's Gospel narrative of Jesus is set in the context of a journey with Jerusalem as its focus: Jesus now tells the disciples that Jerusalem will become the hub from which the preaching of the Gospel will radiate out to the whole world. But not quite yet: the Holy Spirit will be the driving force and the Spirit has still to come. ■

DO

Look up the references to the Jewish scriptures in some Sunday Gospel passage. See if this helps your understanding of the reading and, more importantly, of the person of Jesus.

**REFLECT**

Luke is concerned to show that the risen Jesus is present when his disciples gather together to share a meal in his memory. The essential elements in this celebration are setting what happened to Jesus in the context of the Hebrew scriptures and the breaking of bread.

In our Sunday readings, the first reading and the Gospel are thematically linked: sometimes the connection is more obvious than on other occasions, but the fundamental point remains, that the Gospels can only be fully understood against the background of what we usually call the Old Testament. A homily is an explanation of the scripture readings: a sermon is more of a class or lecture on some specific point of church teaching. It is an interesting point from the Emmaus story that Cleopas and his companion are homilising as they make their way from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They are focused on Jesus and what happened to him, but, without the Hebrew scriptures, this remains an insoluble puzzle. The same message is forcefully conveyed in today's passage.

There is much more interest now in Catholic circles in the study of the Bible: a version with cross-references in the margin is a great help in making the links between Gospel passages and their Hebrew counterparts. ■

LEARN

In the Bible, people never discover God: God always reveals Godself.

The official teaching of the Catholic Church places the scriptures in the context of God's self-revelation as the Word of God.

The liturgy of the word is an essential element in the celebration of the Eucharist and of equal importance to the sacramental part.

SAY

The word of our God
remains for ever.
(Isaiah 40:8)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The merciful love of the Lord fills the earth; by the word of the Lord the heavens were made, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, lead us to a share in the joys of heaven, so that the humble flock may reach where the brave Shepherd has gone before. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 4:8-12

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter said: "Rulers of the people, and elders! If you are questioning us today about an act of kindness to a cripple, and asking us how he was healed, then I am glad to tell you all, and would indeed be glad to tell the whole people of Israel, that it was by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, the one who crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by this name and by no other that this man is able to stand up perfectly healthy, here in your presence today. This is the stone rejected by you the builders, but which has proved to be the keystone. For of all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:

The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone.
or
Alleluia!

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end. It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in men: it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. (R.)

2. I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour. The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone. This is the work of the Lord, a marvel in our eyes. (R.)
3. Blessed in the name of the Lord is he who comes. We bless you from the house of the Lord; I will thank you for you have given answer and you are my saviour. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good; for his love has no end. (R.)

SECOND READING

1 John 3:1-2

A reading from the first letter of St John. Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are. Because the world refused to acknowledge him, therefore it does not acknowledge us. My dear people, we are already the children of God but what we are to be in the future has not yet been revealed; all we know is, that when it is revealed we shall be like him because we shall see him as he really is.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the good shepherd, says the Lord;
I know my own sheep and my own know me.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 10:11-18

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said:

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock and one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as it is in my power to lay it down,

so it is in my power to take it up again; and this is the command I have been given by my Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

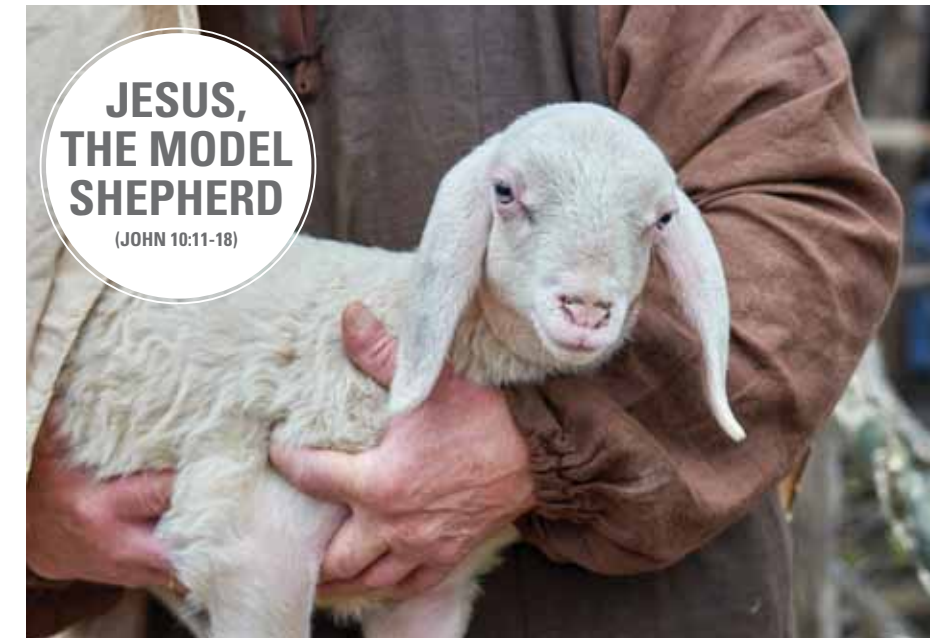
Grant, we pray, O Lord, that we may always find delight in these paschal mysteries, so that the renewal constantly at work within us may be the cause of our unending joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The Good Shepherd has risen, who laid down his life for his sheep and willingly died for his flock, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your flock, kind Shepherd, and be pleased to settle in eternal pastures the sheep you have redeemed by the Precious Blood of your Son. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

THE WORD

The readings from the Gospels continue to reflect on Jesus' fulfilling the mission given to him by the Father. He reflects on the difference between himself as "the model shepherd" and the one who simply does the job for money and is not committed to the members of the flock for any other reason.

The essential factor is that the paid employee has no meaningful relationship with those entrusted to his care: elsewhere, Jesus likens himself to the shepherd who knows all the sheep by name, illustrated by his addressing Mary Magdalene by name at the tomb on Easter Day. We might note that, although the Hebrew scriptures talk about the messianic shepherd who will gather the scattered people together, there is no notion of one who will give his life for the flock.

Jesus' commitment to the Father is shown by his being willing freely to lay down his life and take it up again, as he will demonstrate later in the washing of the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Thus, what happens to Jesus is not some tragic accident, but rather "the command I have been given by my Father". It is in this mystery that the love of the Father will be revealed, difficult though it may be for us to understand. ■

REFLECT

One reason why farmers apparently are reluctant to give names to their animals is that it makes them in a sense into pets and so would cause all sorts of problems when the time comes to send them to be slaughtered for their meat. On the other hand, there are stories of tough and seasoned shepherds being reduced to tears when their dog, which has been their companion perhaps for many years, has to be put down to spare it further suffering. The difference in reaction reveals the contrast in relationship. In our Gospel reading today, we are invited to reflect on what

the Easter mystery tells us about Jesus, ourselves and what being a disciple means.

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus is not saying that he has power to lay down and take up his life again, so much as that he has authority to do so. He stresses that this is his own decision, freely taken. We might consider that what matters in the end is our own personal relationship with Jesus. It is easy to imagine the Church as a sea of anonymous faces, for example as pictures of St Peter's Square suggest: there is truth in this, that the

SAY

Jesus is the model shepherd: he knows my name.
(see John 10:11)

LEARN

There is only one commandment in the Fourth Gospel: "love one another".

There is no equivalent to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew) or on the Plain (Luke) in the Gospel according to John.

The figure of the shepherd is used in the Hebrew scriptures to refer to the leaders of Israel, often in a context of criticism.

DO

Notice the people in the street as you walk along: do you imagine Jesus having a general interest in their well-being or his having a personal interest in each one? How do you feel he relates to yourself?

