

**St Mary's, Inverness**  
The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]  
**The Year of St Ignatius**  
**20 MAY 2021 >31 JULY 2022**

**FIFTIETH IGNATIAN REFLECTION**

**IGNATIUS AND THE RESURRECTION : JESUS, THE APOSTLES & THOMAS**



**THE LORD IS RISEN AND GREETES HIS DISCIPLES**



**THOMAS : DOUBT AND FAITH**

In the Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius invites us to reflect prayerfully on the Mystery of Easter.

The Resurrection of Jesus. *Resurrexit ! He is Risen !*

*Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed!*

We begin our meditations by praying the prayer the *Anima Christi*.

*Soul of Christ, sanctify me.*

*Body of Christ, save me.*

*Blood of Christ, inebriate me.*

*Water from the side of Christ, wash me.*

*Passion of Christ, strengthen me.*

*O good Jesus, hear me.*

*Within your wounds hide me.*

*Do not allow me to be separated from you.*

*From the malevolent enemy defend me.*

*In the hour of my death call me,*

*and bid me come to you,*

*that with your saints I may praise you*

*forever and ever. Amen.*

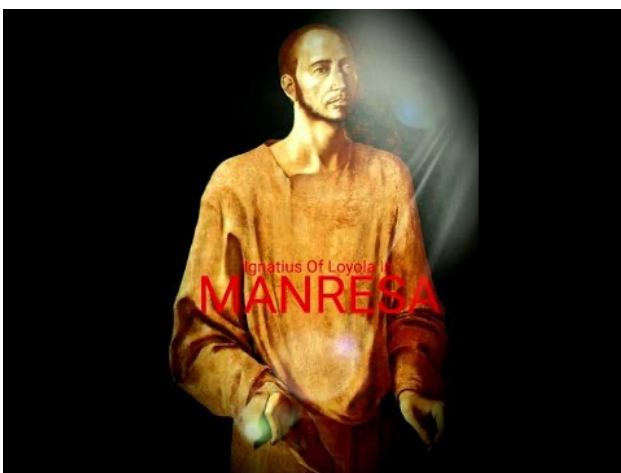
*(Translation by George E. Ganss, SJ)*

In the Easter period we become aware of the different appearances of the Risen Jesus. We become aware of the continuity of Jesus our Christ as He involves us all in His soul, His bodily anguish and His spirited graciousness. We recall the words of St Paul : *"For me, living is Christ"* [Philippians 1.21]

St Paul also writes ***“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”*** [Gal.2.20]

God works His way through all that is deadly and all that confines us in the Resurrection of Jesus. Everything that is evil, is overcome through the Triumph of the Cross and the events of Easter : ***Resurrexit! He is risen!*** This proclamation, the Good News, brings new life in the Risen Christ.

In the ***Autobiography*** of Ignatius he shares with the reader the story of the conversion to a New Life in Christ of the worldly, vain-glorious, proud and ambitious gentleman-at-arms. The life-shattering wounds he received at Pamplona were wounds by which he was healed in spirit and in truth through prayerful reading at his home in Loyola and then with the further graces of Montserrat and Manresa. Ignatius Loyola was being transformed into that which he was by Baptism, a Living Son of God. The hidden seed of Baptism had been nurtured, cherished and revived through reading a Life of Christ, and the graces of prayer.



The profundity of his conversion to New Life in Christ was to shape his entire future. He embraced the Life of the Resurrection. In that life Ignatius invites others through ***The Spiritual Exercises*** to walk with him in the Pilgrim Journey of Faith. We share in his

hard-won spiritual insights and the gracious generosity of God. In the

formative period at Manresa Ignatius had wise counsellors who helped him to have a sense of proportion after the initial fervour and austerities following his deepening conversion to Christ. From his deep and sustained prayer he was graced by genuine illuminations at Manresa. The Spiritual Exercises are a fruit of that.

***The Spiritual Exercises*** presuppose a period of thirty-one days, four weeks of prayerful exercises in which an Ignatian guide accompanies a person making a Retreat.



In our daily life we are able draw on the spiritual resources of the Ignatian Way to deepen our own understanding of God's way with us.

We are on a Pilgrim Journey and Jesus walks with us. As Pope John Paul II famously said, "***We are an Easter people and 'alleluia' is our song,***"

In the Easter period Ignatius sets out his meditations under thirteen Apparitions, appearances of the Risen Lord. We have reflected on the First, Second, Third and Fourth apparitions .

In **The First Apparition** Ignatius begins with Our Lady.

He writes : "***He appeared to the Virgin Mary. Although this is not mentioned in Scripture, it is considered as mentioned when the Scripture says that He appeared to so many others,....***"

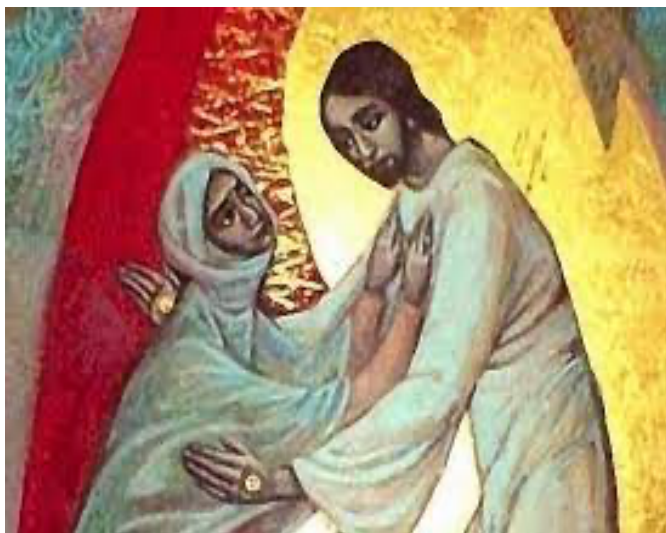
Pope John Paul II recalled that it is *“reasonable to think that Mary, as the image and model of the Church which waits for the Risen One and meets him in the group of disciples during his Easter appearances, had had a personal contact with her risen Son, so that she too could delight in the fullness of paschal joy.”*



In **The Second Apparition**, following St Mark's Gospel [Mk 16.1-11] we were introduced to the first account in the Gospel tradition. During the visit in early morning by the three women [Mary Magdalene, Mary the

Mother of Jesus, Salome] the women are perplexed. They wonder how they might open the tomb.

Imagine their surprise : *“they see the stone rolled back and an angel who says, ‘You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth... he has risen he is not here’”*



The words *‘He has Risen’* are found in the earliest proclamations of Faith. These words resound through the Tradition. We find this ‘primitive kerygma’, very early proclamations of the Easter message, embedded in the letters of St Paul. Again we find them

in the earliest preaching recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The message that *‘Christ is Risen’* is the pivotal declaration that drew men and women into the Community of Faith. With St Paul Christians declare *“For me, living is Christ”* [Philippians 1.21] Being *‘in Christ’* is the participation, the

communion, the fellowship that all Christians share in the 'Common Life in the Body of Christ'.

**The Third Apparition** : this Meditation from the Gospel of St Matthew [Matt 28.8-10] takes the story forward: Ignatius describes *The Third Apparition* : *"These Marys go from the tomb with great fear and joy. They want to announce the Resurrection of the Lord to the disciples... Christ our Lord appeared to them on the way, and said to them, 'Hail' and they came up to Him and prostrated themselves at His feet, and adored Him....*

*Jesus said to them: 'Do not be afraid; go take word to my brethren that they are to set out for Galilee; there they shall see me.'"*



Imagine these purposeful women, excited and eager they carry the narrative forward. They are dynamic and positive eager to share their good news. They want to tell of their encounter with Jesus who had greeted them. Worshipping Him they hear His reassuring words :

**'Do not be afraid'**. The Risen Lord tells them that He is going on ahead to Galilee where the disciples are to go.

The Resurrection narrative is full of movement.

**The Fourth Apparition** is to Peter. Another reassurance is to be made, further encouragement to Peter. In the list of the witnesses to the Resurrection recorded by St Paul it is Peter who is mentioned first, and it is Peter the first of the Apostles who sees the Risen Lord. We know little else, but the account in *The Spiritual Exercises* based on St Luke 24. 10-12, & 33-34 is fruitful for contemplation.



*First : When Peter heard from the women that Christ had risen, he hastened to the Tomb.*

*Second : Peter entered the tomb and saw nothing but the linen cloths with which the body of Christ, our Lord had been covered.*

*Third : While Peter was thinking about these things, Christ appeared to him. Therefore the Apostles said : "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon."*

Peter, the rock, Peter the first of the Apostles, Peter who had denied Jesus and fled was now coming forward in finding Jesus. The Reconciling Love at the heart of the journey which is Resurrection life was beginning.

***The Fifth Apparition*** takes the journey from fearful defeat forward into the new future.

We are again in the Gospel of St Luke { Lk 24.13-35}.

On the evening of the first Easter Sunday Jesus, at some stage on their journey, accompanies two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They are heading away from the despair in Jerusalem to this small town about seven miles away. While they were conversing about the recent past, and the hopes that seemed to have been dashed, they became aware of another person travelling with them. They failed to recognise their fellow walker on that dusty road. They were not expecting to see Jesus again, nor for Him to rise from the dead. They were mourning the loss of all they had hoped for and this had induced their flight from Jerusalem.



Ignatius invites us to follow the Gospel narrative in three stages:

***First : “He appeared to the disciples, who were on the way to Emmaus and were talking of Christ”.***

***Second : “He reproaches them, and shows them by the Scriptures, that Christ had to die and rise again : ‘O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Did not Christ have to suffer these things before entering into His glory?’***



***Third : " At their entreaties, He remained with them, until He gave them communion; then He disappeared. And they returned to the disciples and told them how they had known Him in the Communion."***



***The Sixth Apparition :*** In St John's account [Chapter 20: 19-23] we find that on the evening of that first Easter Day the disciples, without Thomas, were sheltering behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. The Risen Jesus appears to them with the greeting "***Peace be with you.***" Displaying his wounds the disciples are overjoyed as they realise it is Jesus. " On seeing the Lord the disciples were overjoyed". Again, Jesus says "***Peace be with you.***" Then breathing on them He said "***Receive the Holy Spirit***", and gives them the authority to forgive sins.



Ignatius makes three points for our consideration.

***First point – The disciples, except for Thomas were gathered together, for 'Fear of the Jews'***

***Second point – Jesus appeared to them, the doors being closed, and standing in their midst said, ‘Peace be with you’.***

***Third point – He gives them the Holy Spirit saying to them: “Receive the Holy Spirit; Whose sins you shall forgive they shall be forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”***

**Points to ponder..**

- Fear is natural in the face of danger, and the disciples were aware of the hatred directed towards Jesus and how this had led to His arrest, trials, and the road to the Cross.
- Religious persecution is an insidious evil that corrodes society. We are aware of the persecution of Christians in some countries, and the ghastly evil whereby Christians persecute other Christians. We might readily recall the work of **Aid to the Church in Need** in addressing these problems.
- ***“Peace be with you!” ‘Shalom’***- The Jewish greeting, has great depth of meaning. It is used colloquially to mean ‘Hello’, or ‘Goodbye’, but there are profound greetings of prayer behind ***‘Shalom’***, as it invites and prays for ‘wholeness’, ‘human dignity’, happiness, beatitude- being ‘right’ with God. In its fullness of expression it might be the ***‘peace which passes all understanding’*** because it embodies everything necessary for human well-being, and ‘the common weal’. We are bound together in the search for peace and that beatitude which is Life with God. Our greetings day by day when undertaken with prayer can be utterly transformative: ***“Peace***



*be with you*" no longer a perfunctory liturgical expression, but the very words of Jesus to encourage and shape us and to heal the wounds of our broken world.

- ***"Receive the Holy Spirit"***, Jesus gives all of the disciples the power to reconcile, to forgive and raise people up to the New Life of Easter. The authority given elsewhere [St Matthew's Gospel] to Peter is here given to the whole of the Apostolic Church. Peter, first among equals, is the focus of the Unity of the Apostles and the guardian of the Faith of the Apostles who share in his ministry of reconciling love. The Apostolic Church receives 'jurisdiction' from the Risen Lord.

### ***The Seventh Apparition : Thomas, his doubts and his faith.***

St John moves the story along, and a week later after the Sixth Apparition Jesus appeared again to the disciples who were still behind locked doors, but this time Thomas was with them. He had previously expressed his incredulity about the Resurrection. Again, the greeting is ***"Peace be with you"*** and then Jesus invites Thomas to touch his wounded hands and his side, and encouraging him to believe.

Thomas said, ***"My Lord and my God !"***



Ignatius makes three points for our imaginative prayer:

***First point – Thomas was incredulous since he had not been present at the preceding apparition, and said: "Unless I see...I will not believe"***

***Second Point – Eight days later Jesus appeared to them, the doors being shut, and said to Thomas “Bring here thy finger and see... and be not unbelieving but believing.”***

***Third point- Thomas believing, said “my Lord and my God” And Christ said to him : “Blessed are they who have not seen, and have believed.”***

### **POINTS TO PONDER :**

Thomas represents every one who was not a witness to the Resurrection. He has profound doubts expressed in very physical terms. Doubt is a natural phenomenon. The words of the Spanish philosopher, **Miguel de Unamuno** express the paradox of Doubt and Faith :

***“Doubt and belief are two halves of the same hinge, neither is defined without the other.”***

- Jesus, the Good Shepherd, returns to seek Thomas. He meets him where he is. Thomas who had doubted in seeing the Risen Lord expresses his Faith : ***“My Lord and my God”***. This prayer of faith has a resonance in every believer’s ear.
- St John Chrysostom points out that ***“Thomas, being once weaker in faith than the other apostles, toiled through the grace of God more bravely, more zealously and tirelessly than them all, so that he went preaching over nearly all the earth, not fearing to proclaim the Word of God...”*** Thomas was to be an ardent missionary in India founding many Christian churches.
- *The writer to the Hebrews [11:1] expresses Biblical faith : “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of*

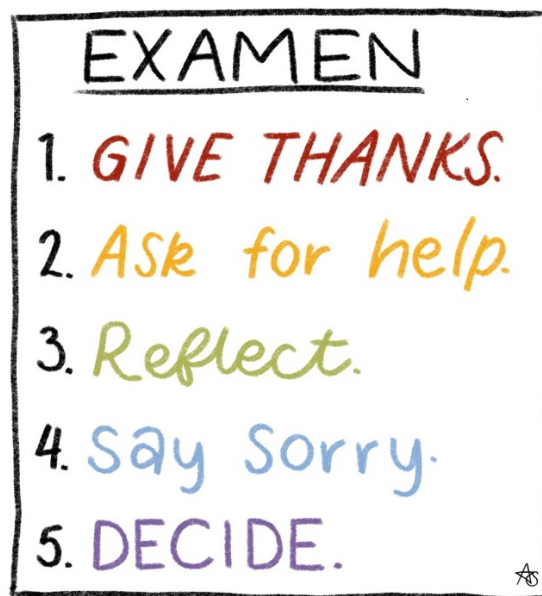
*things not seen*". The Divine Presence is close to hand for the person of Faith : ***"God can be found in all things" [Ignatius]***

- *Faith is a Blessing – 'those who have not seen, and have believed'*
- Jesus teaches that where two or three are gathered He is with them. The Spiritual dimension of our 'communion', our being together 'in Christ' is a transformative relationship that enhances Faith.

## THE EXAMINATION OF OUR LIVES [THE EXAMEN]

### Daily Examen:

Looking with quiet sincerity and simplicity of heart at the day



## GETTING READY FOR THE GIFT OF SCRIPTURE

We place ourselves in the presence of God.

- We ask the Holy Spirit to settle our minds, and open our hearts.
- ***Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.***

- Our conversation with God begins as we express our gratitude for our blessings and by expressing our sorrow for personal sin.
- We ask that The Holy Spirit may enliven our reading and understanding.

*Come, Holy Spirit, our souls inspire  
and lighten with celestial fire;*

That our hearts may burn within us as the words of scripture take shape in our imaginative prayer.

- We place ourselves into the scene of the Scripture : what we see, what we hear, what it feels like, what we smell, what we might taste.
- Reading silently or aloud we form the words as they take shape in our creative imagination

### **Passage for Spiritual Reflection : St Luke 7.1-10**

*"When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." So Jesus went with them. He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my*

*servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well".*



### **Points for Consideration :**

- A gentile Centurion asks some Jewish elders to request that Jesus heals his highly regarded servant : in the presence of grave illness people reach out for Divine assistance. Prayer requests for others, intercession, is a part of daily prayer.
- The Centurion is a benefactor of the Jewish people : are we mindful of the benefactions of others whether to self, family or parish > thankful prayer is appropriate.
- The humility of the Centurion as Jesus approaches : ***"Sir, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof"*** Such humility resonates through the ages as it was taken into the Liturgy- we recall the words from Mass.

- The profound faith and trust that the Centurion had in Jesus was exemplary : ***“Not even in Israel have I found such faith.”*** Faith transcends frontiers, rank, and even religion, as it is an expression of tender humanity searching for understanding. The Centurion’s loving concern for his servant leads him to trust in Jesus about whom he had heard. The message of Healing Love brings hope and leads to Faith.

**A Period of Silence** in which we pray with St Ignatius, talking conversationally to the Lord Jesus, thanking Him for being ‘Our Daily Bread’

**“The Suscipe”**

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding,  
and my entire will,  
All I have and call my own.

You have given all to me.  
To you, Lord, I return it.

Everything is yours; do with it what you will.  
Give me only your love and your grace,  
that is enough for me.

*“For those who love, nothing is too difficult, especially when it is done for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* *Ignatius Loyola*

**The Lord’s Prayer**



*Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray*

*Praise God Always*