

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

FIFTY-THIRD IGNATIAN REFLECTION
IGNATIUS : THE RESURRECTION & THE ASCENSION



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 have used the Spiritual Exercises to reflect on the Easter appearances as recorded in Tradition and in Scripture. The Risen Lord appears to His mother, and the Three Marys, then to Peter, then to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus. Again He appears to the Disciples and then to Thomas who had been sceptical. In Galilee, while fishing, Jesus continues to nourish the disciples. In the Ninth Apparition the Disciples become Apostles, charged with the Great Commission: to go to all the nations baptising in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.



Ignatius encourages us to reflect on five further Apparitions and then the Ascension of the Lord.

To prepare for these reflections Ignatius encourages his Companions, to pray with the Anima Christi.

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 the different recorded appearances of the Risen Jesus indicate the continuity of Jesus, the Christ, into history touching us all. Through the Resurrection we become involved in the gracious mystery that is Jesus, God-in-Christ. The existential nature of our faith is illustrated by St Paul : ***“For me, living is Christ”*** [Philippians 1.21] Elsewhere he affirms this ***“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”*** [Gal.2.20]

Resurrexit! He is risen! This proclamation, the Good News, brings new life in the Risen Christ for those who enter in faith- by the grace of Baptism.

In his ***Autobiography*** Ignatius tells how his own conversion to the 'New Life in Christ' came about. The worldly, vain-glorious, proud and ambitious gentleman-at-arms became a humble disciple of Christ. What had begun in Baptism had been nurtured, cherished and revived after the impact of the life-changing injuries at Pamplona in May 1521. During his convalescence at Loyola through reading a Life of Christ, the Lives of the Saints, and the graces of prayer Inigo Lopez became Ignatius of Loyola a great Pilgrim and Missionary for Christ.

In The Spiritual Exercises we walk with Ignatius in the Pilgrim Journey of Faith sharing in his hard-won spiritual insights and the gracious generosity of God.

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 was said by St Pope John Paul II “ ***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, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth of the Apparitions .

Ignatius underlines the 'companionable' aspect of the Risen Jesus. Just as in the Gospel story his present-day disciples, now as then, eat with Him. We recall how at Emmaus in the Fifth Apparition it is in 'the breaking of bread' that the disciples recognised Him. He is the Host at every Mass- He feeds us with Himself ***{Jesus Christ God's Son Saviour / ICTHUS the Greek for 'Fish'}*** The Fish Symbol was found engraved in the walls of the earliest Christian assemblies in Rome, in the subterranean catacombs. Jesus in the Resurrection shows Himself to be "ICTHYS". Reverence for Jesus in the Holy Sacrament of the altar brings us together into our Common Life calling us to devotion and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.



In the The Ninth Apparition Jesus gave the Disciples the Great Commission :



“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

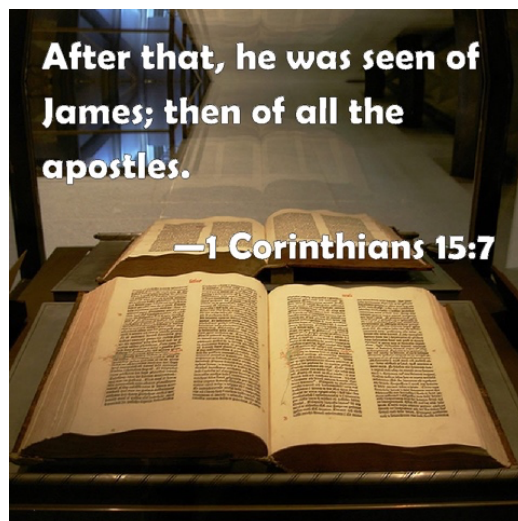
He sent them to preach throughout the world, saying: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

In the Tenth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Apparitions we are reliant upon the early written accounts when St Paul was writing to the Christians in Corinth. In these different references we recall that more than five hundred of the brethren were aware of the Presence of the Risen Lord at one occasion. The Risen Lord is dynamic and encounters groups and individuals to encourage them in Faith.

1 Corinthians 15:6

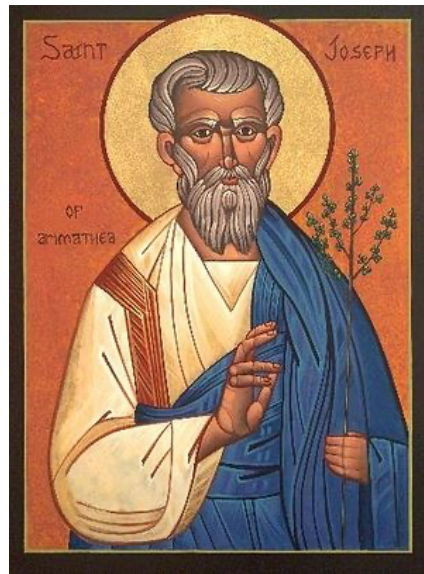
After that, he was seen of
above five hundred brethren
at once; of whom the greater
part remain unto this
present, but some are fallen
asleep

Five Hundred see the Risen Jesus in the Tenth Apparition. this may not be surprising when we recall that Jesus attracted crowds who followed Him and were nourished by Him in His teaching and by his distribution of Bread and Fish- the people sat in groups of fifties and hundreds and could be as many as five thousand. The Risen Lord's appearances were to affirm the nature of His Risen Life and to encourage Faith.

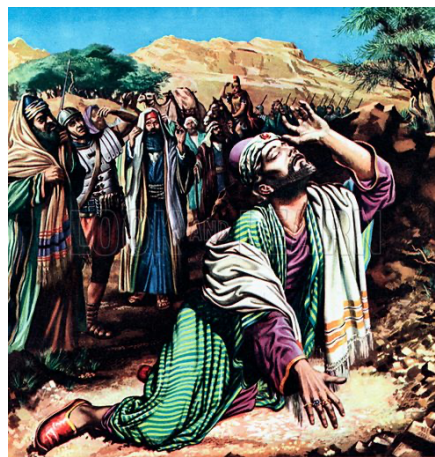


'After that he was seen by James'

The brothers, and the wider family of Jesus, were sceptical about the nature of the ministry of Jesus. In the period of the Resurrection appearances we are informed by St Paul that James was a witness to the Risen Lord. This witness became the authentic witness of martyrdom.



The Twelfth Appearance is not recorded in scripture, but it probably reflects a pious devotion to ***Joseph of Arimathea***. He had been the generous and competent 'undertaker' who had helped to give the dead body of Jesus a dignified burial in a tomb that Joseph had bought. It is not surprising that the respect and devotion that surrounded Joseph of Arimathea should result in the pious thought that is found in the Lives of the Saints.



In the Thirteenth Apparition St Ignatius again refers to St Paul's own words concerning the appearance of the Risen Lord to Saul himself, the Persecutor of the first Christians, as described in the Spiritual Exercises quoting from the first letter to the Corinthians:

"After His Ascension He appeared to St Paul:- 'And last of all. As by one born out of due time, He was seen by me'.

After this Ignatius refers to *The Descent of Jesus into Limbo*. Here Ignatius is drawing upon the scriptural teaching of St Paul in the letter to the Ephesians, that after Christ had died, but before the Ascension, He *“descended into the deepest levels of the earth”* [Eph 4:9].

In the First Letter of St Peter : *“In the body Christ was put to death, in the spirit He was raised to life, and in the spirit, He went to preach to the spirits in prison”* [1 Peter 3: 18-19]

These words of Scripture, within the Apostolic Tradition, find their place in the *Apostles’ Creed* where it states that Jesus *“suffered death under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into Hell’*. The Catechism of the Catholic Church clarifies this : This is not the hell of the damned. It is ‘limbo’ where the just of previous generations were waiting for Christ, so *“in His human soul united to His divine person, the dead Christ went down to the realm of the dead. He opened heaven’s gate for the just who had gone before him”* {Catechism of the Catholic Church, 637}



He appeared also in soul to the holy fathers in Limbo, and after He had freed them and taken His body again, He appeared many times to the disciples and discoursed with them.”

Ignatius would have been familiar with this within the Tradition of the Church- all salvation comes through Christ. By the mystery of His Death and Resurrection, He reconciled the world to God. Even those who lived before the coming of Christ are saved only through His paschal mystery. Cf. 2 Cor 5:19. *“In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation”.*

Ignatius concludes this section of the Spiritual Exercises with the Ascension of Christ Our Lord.



He summarises the account of the Ascension given by St Luke in the First Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles:

- *First Point – After Christ Our Lord had manifested Himself for forty days to His Apostles, giving them many proofs and signs,*

and speaking of the Kingdom of God. He commanded them to await in Jerusalem the Holy Spirit that He had promised them.

- *Second Point – He led them to Mt Olivet, and He was lifted up before their eyes, and a cloud took Him out of their sight.*
- *Third Point – While they were looking up to heaven, angels said to them : ‘Men of Galilee why do you stand looking up to heaven? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall come in the same way as you have seen Him going up to heaven’”.*



Points to ponder

- In the Resurrection period, after the first Easter Day, Jesus is dynamic : he comes and goes and takes people with him into understanding the New Life. The disciples were told to leave behind the circumstances of Jerusalem and go to Galilee where Jesus would meet them. ‘Trust’ is the keynote here – the disciples are attracted by the power and teaching of Jesus and they are willing

to be led and to be persuaded by Him. We learn to trust and be prepared to go out of ourselves to seek Jesus. Whoever seeks finds!

- The creative energy of Divine Life empowers Jesus in every aspect of His being. God-is-in-Christ, reconciling the world to Himself. In our world of time, in the here and now, He has no hands but our hands to embrace the world.
- The task of the Great Commission : to bring about a New World in which people everywhere are brought by the power of the Gospel to Baptism in the Three-fold Divine Name.
- The Most Holy Trinity, is the imperative and challenge. In Baptism we are raised up into the New Life of the Risen Christ. We are anointed as Prophets, Priests and Kings – to hear the Gospel and to proclaim it by what we say and what we do.
- New Creation, the Life of the Resurrection. We are in the vanguard of this : ***“We are an Easter People and ‘Alleluia’ is our Song”***.
- Five hundred witnesses of the Risen Lord – how many hundreds attend Mass Sunday by Sunday? The power of the Resurrection can transform and give new life : ***Deus dat incrementum- ‘God gives the increase’***. He needs all our strength and commitment.
- From doubt and agnosticism to heroic witness : James is a study in a life transformed by the power of recognition. Jesus is what He says and does what He says. ***“I am the Resurrection and the Life”***
- The Descent into Hell/Limbo- a recognition that the Love of God in Christ transcends death and the Healing love of God reaches the depths of everything.
- The Ascension challenges us in our imaginative sense- God is beyond all our reckoning of time, space and place. Heaven is the

Presence of the Love of God – we are all drawn to that, and in Christ we will share in all that God gives in the immensity of His gracious Love. Sometimes the poetry of a hymn raises our hearts and minds to begin to comprehend, and reinforces our understanding that in the Mystery of the Eucharist we are nourished and graced beyond all our imaginings.

*Alleluia! Sing To Jesus! His The Sceptre,
His The Throne.*

*Alleluia! His The Triumph,
His The Victory Alone.*

*Hark! The Songs Of Peaceful Zion
Thunder Like A Mighty Flood.
Jesus Out Of Every Nation
Has Redeemed Us By His Blood.*

*Alleluia! Not As Orphans
Are We Left In Sorrow Now;
Alleluia! He Is Near Us,
Faith Believes, Nor Questions How;
Though The Cloud From Sight Received Him
When The Forty Days Were Over
Shall Our Hearts Forget His Promise,
I Am With You Evermore?*

*Alleluia! Bread Of Angels,
Here On Earth Our Food, Our Stay;
Alleluia! Here The Sinful*

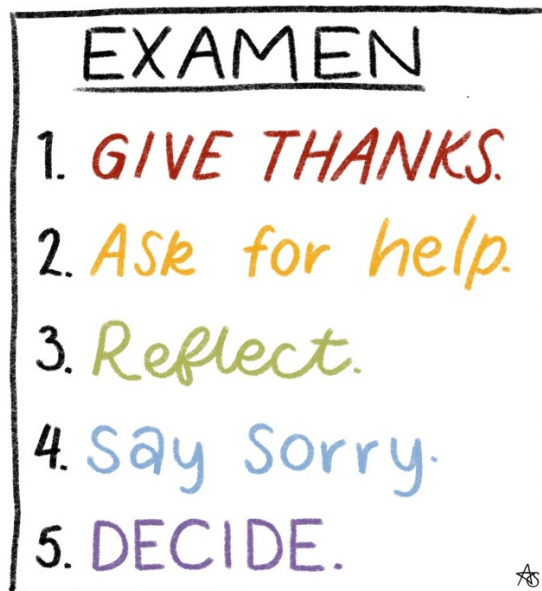
*Flee To You From Day To Day:
Intercessor, Friend Of Sinners,
Earth's Redeemer, Plead For Me,
Where The Songs Of All The Sinless
Sweep Across The Crystal Sea.*

*Alleluia! King Eternal,
You The Lord Of Lords We Own;
Alleluia! Born Of Mary,
Earth Your Footstool,
Heaven Your Throne:
You Within The Veil Has Entered,
Robed In Flesh Our Great High Priest;
Here On Earth Both Priest And
Victim In The Eucharistic Feast*

THE EXAMINATION OF OUR LIVES [THE EXAMEN]

Daily Examen:

Looking with quiet sincerity and simplicity of heart at the day

- 
- EXAMEN
1. GIVE THANKS.
 2. Ask for help.
 3. Reflect.
 4. Say Sorry.
 5. DECIDE.
- ✱

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 : Letter of St Paul to Colossians 1.1-14

“ 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. ⁷ You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

⁹ For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, ¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. ¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”.

Points for Reflection:

- St Paul greets and encourages others in the Faith : every day should be a day of encouragement
- Letters, texts messages, cards and emails : how easy it is to encourage another and maintain affectionate prayerful thoughts
- Looking at the growth of the Church – are we sufficiently concerned to write letters to follow-up those who may be falling away
- When Paul was writing to the Colossians it was a period of reflection on the truths of the Faith. In our days the Faith is constantly scrutinised. Catholic Christians perhaps need more confidence to articulate the Faith- how are we doing?

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