

SPIRIT-LED NEWS



PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Offices will be closed on Monday, May 30th, in observance of Memorial Day.

Food Pantry- If you or someone you know needs food assistance, we can help! Come see us on Tuesday, May 31st from 10 am - 12 noon in front of the One Community Center.

All Respect Life Coordinators and Supporters: Join Us to Pray for the end of Abortion and Peace in Our World. Promote the Gospel of Life **"The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin."**

St Elizabeth Church in Aiea, Tuesday, May 31, 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm Mass, Benediction and Adoration. For more information, contact Parish Respect Life Coordinators Jared and Amy Zick at (910) 797-5505.

DEBT REDUCTION SECOND COLLECTION: We will have a second collection, next weekend, June 4/5, after communion. Your donation will help pay for the mortgage of the One Community Center. Envelopes are available at the back of the church or on our parish website, online giving. Your generosity is much appreciated.

STEWARDSHIP BULLETIN REFLECTION (LUKE 24:46 -53)

By Catholic Stewardship Consultants

On this Feast of the Ascension, we celebrate Christ's triumphant return to the Father after perfectly accomplishing His mission on earth. But we also can also view this Feast as a celebration of the "launch day" of our commissioning as Christ's disciples.

Today's Gospel draws our attention to the clear instructions that Jesus gave His disciples (and to us) just before ascending to the Father: "Thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

Embracing a stewardship way of life, with its emphasis on the use of time, talent, and treasure, helps us to live in such a way that our very lives speak as a witness of the Good News of the Gospel. While we take time to reflect and renew our commitments in these three areas annually as a parish family, it is of great benefit to take some time individually throughout the year to take stock of the

Continue to page 3.

ST. JOHN APOSTLE & EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH
 95-370 Kuahelani Ave. Mililani, Hawaii 96789 | (808) 623-3332
www.stjohnmililani.org

MISSION / VISION STATEMENT: WE ARE A CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY—called to develop a deeper relationship with Christ. Such a relationship is fostered through active participation in: *Word, Sacrament, Renewal Programs, Ministry/Service* and other ***Spirit-led*** activities.

We dedicate our time, talent, and treasure to install, in our parish community the basic building blocks of Christian living, ***to preach the Good News of Jesus Christ to all through our words, deeds, and lives.***

PASTOR Fr. Anthony Rapozo

In Residence Fr. John Gabriel

DEACON Dcn. Romeo Ganibe

*FULL Parish Clergy & Staff Directory available
on our website.*

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekday: 8AM (Monday - Saturday)

Sunday: 5PM (Saturday Vigil), 7AM, 9AM,
11AM (Livestream)
youtube.com/c/SaintJohnMililani
& 6PM

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday: 4:00 - 4:30PM

PARISH RECTORY HOURS

Monday 12PM - 4PM

Tuesday - Friday 8:30AM - 4:00PM

Saturday - Sunday Closed

Please call the office for all other inquiries:
Anointing, Baptisms, Blessings, Food Pantry,
Funeral , Homebound Communion &
Marriage.

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE MAY 21/22

Sunday Collection	\$ 9,165.65
Online Donation (WeShare)	\$ 3,127.00
Building, Equipment & Maintenance (BEM)	\$ 102.00
OCC Capital Campaign (Non-Assessed)	\$ 390.00
Debt Reduction	\$ 201.00
Social Ministry	\$ 5.00
Children's Collection	\$ 1.00
Stewardship	\$ 125.00
Mass Intentions	\$ 40.00
Candles	\$ 331.00
Father's Day	\$ 125.00
Catholic Communications Campaign	\$ 130.00
Diocesan Priest Retirement Fund	\$ 253.50
'Ohana in Christ	\$ 65.00

WEEKEND TOTAL \$ 14,061.15





FR. ANTHONY'S STEWARDSHIP CORNER (THE LIGHT OFFERED BY FAITH)

Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life, and their spirituality. If we are truly concerned about developing an ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no brand of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion, and the language particular to it.

The Catholic Church is open to dialogue with philosophical thought; this has enabled her to produce various syntheses between faith and reason. The development of the Church's social teaching represents such a synthesis with regard to social issues; the teaching is called to be enriched by taking up new challenges.

I would like from the outset to show how faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters. If the simple fact of being human moves people to care for the environment of which they are a part, Christians in their turn realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty towards nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith. It is good for humanity and the world at large when we believers better recognize the ecological commitments which stem from our convictions.

Fr. Anthony Pope

STEWARDSHIP BULLETIN REFLECTION (CONTINUE FROM PAGE 1)

commitments we have made — looking at both our strengths and our need for continued growth in each area.

On this Feast of our "launch day," take some time to celebrate your victories as Christ's disciples and renew your commitment to remain faithful to Him and the unique mission He has entrusted to you!

"At His Ascension our Lord entered Heaven, and He keeps the door open for humanity to enter."
— OSWALD CHAMBERS

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday May 30, 2022

8AM Anthony Scarpelli
(Birthday Memorial)
Norma Gamulo
(Birthday Blessing)
Benitez 'Ohana (Blessing)

Tuesday May 31, 2022

8AM Rodolfo Taglinao
(Death Anniversary)
Amelie Maeva Goo (RIP)
Ernesto Villareal (Birthday Blessing)

Wednesday June 1, 2022

8AM Gloria T. Pacpaco (RIP)
Rudy Oasay (Death Anniversary)
Cheryl Kiernan (Healing)

Thursday June 2, 2022

8AM Gloria T. Pacpaco (RIP)
Xóchitl Cabrales (Healing)

Friday

8AM Feliciano Dona (RIP)
Luther G. Fernandez (RIP)
Guerrero Family (Blessing)

Saturday

8AM All Souls in Purgatory (RIP)
Samuel S. Aguirre (Blessing)
Chan Family (Healing)
5PM McGarry, Gallogly, Barbour,
Tatistcheff Family (Blessing)

Sunday

7AM M/M Bobby Roberson & Brenda
(RIP)
9 AM For the People
11 AM James & Mildred Mizoguchi (RIP)
Eric Umetsu (RIP)
6 PM Gloria T. Pacpaco (RIP)

Cheryl Kiernan (Healing)

June 3, 2022

June 4, 2022

June 5, 2022

FUNERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTITUTA "KATIE" BAKER (RIP), Thursday, June 2, 2022, St John Mililani; Memorial Mass: 10:00 am.

WILLIAM MARTIN BASS JR (RIP), Friday, June 10, 2022, St John Mililani; Visitation: 10:00 am, Eulogy: 10:40 am, Mass: 11:00 am, Burial: 2:00 pm ~ Punchbowl.

NESTOR de la Cruz DEUZ (RIP), Thursday, June 16, 2022, Mililani Memorial Park Mortuary – Makai Chapel: Family: 8:30 am, Prayer Service: 10:30 am, Burial: 11:30 am ~ Mililani Memorial Park.

HEALING / BLESSINGS

Mairenui Tauotaha-Amo, Helen Guerrero, Art Apilado, Monique Carlmark, Jimmy Austin, Elaine Marterella, Thi Choi Nguyen, Christy Esposito, Kevin Gagan, Paulina Sarandi, Eduardo Islao, Joyce B. Bean, Teresa Montoya, James Kahala, Demetrio & Rita Galicinao, Rodney Keli'i, Hildegard Borowitz, Ron Thames, Carol Naumu, Bienvenido Roter, Norma Nazareno & Amelia Santos.

DECEASED

Elizabeth C. Ancheta, Stacey Chambers, Louis Esposito, Paul Swider, James Smith, Adrienne Gregory, Reed Kamikawa, William Martin Bass Jr., Allan Garvida, Mark C. Propios, Ernie C. & Fumiko K. Sombrero, Teresita F. Tuazon, John J. McCormick, Jr., Ronald Palomares & Karlyn Tatemichi.



ST. JOHN 'S CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL

Providing a nurturing quality Catholic Montessori education for all early learners

MAY 2022 NEWS



Thank You . . . Lulu & Danny Clark
for our Butterfly Garden Picture Book

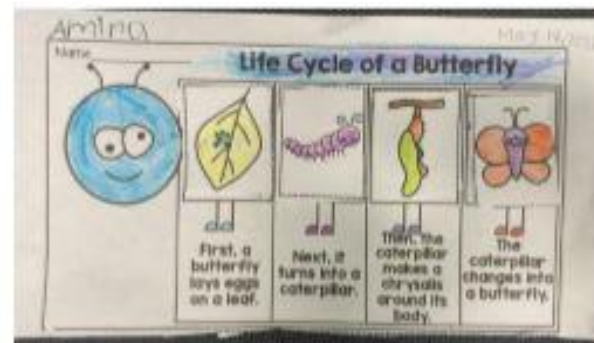
SY 2022-2023 ENROLL TODAY

Download school application on
Stjohnmililani.org website or call
school office at 808.744.9538

HIRING NOW FOR ASST. TEACHER. . . call
school office immediately !!!

It is hard to believe how fast April flew by and the month of May is proving to be another busy month for our Superstars. The children were so excited to explore the new thematic materials in their environment for our Life Cycle unit. Learning is fun and our goal is to make them fall in love with learning.

Discussions about the life cycle of a butterfly has been an eye-opener for our youngsters. Currently they have found eggs on leaves of the crown flower plant, have observed the eggs hatching, and have seen the caterpillars grow FAT by the day's end! The children are charting and graphing the amount of leaves they have placed in the bug house as food for the hungry caterpillars. In a few days, the Superstars will get a chance to see the end stage of a butterfly's life cycle.



Thank You for Your Support

Walkathon

The Superstar Children raised \$7275.00



Boy's Day 2022
Folding origami
Samurai Hats
was a fun
project for the
"Superstar Boys"

Respect Life: “The Lord says to us, ‘Do not fear, I am with you’ (Isaiah 41:10). He speaks these words not as one who merely observes our pain, but as one who experienced immense suffering. And the very wounds that bear witness to his suffering indicate the essence of our identity and worth: we are loved by God. Reflecting on the healed wounds of the Risen Christ, we see that even our most difficult trials can be the place where God manifests his victory. He makes all things beautiful. He makes all things new.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, “Be Not Afraid” NABRE © 2010 CCD. Used with permission.

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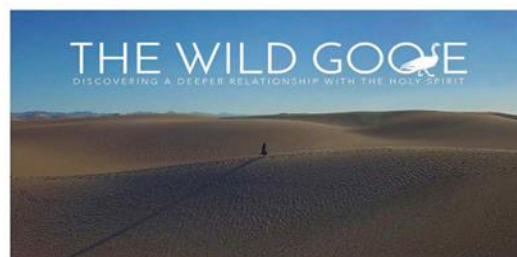
PICK OF THE WEEK

May 29, 2022

WATCH

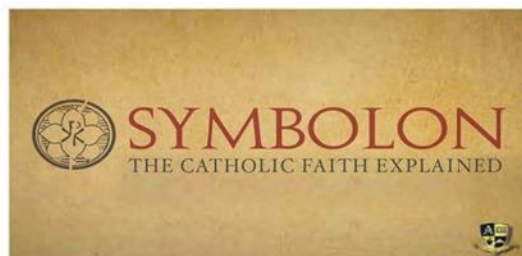
THE WILD GOOSE: GOD’S LOVE POURED OUT

During the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, we remember a fundamental pillar of our Faith: “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8). This simple statement is the beginning and the ending of our pilgrimage of Faith. In this episode of The Wild Goose, join Fr. Dave Pivonka as he illuminates God’s eternal pouring out of Love.



LEARN

SYMBOLON: EP. 1 - THE JOURNEY: TRINITY, FAITH AND THE GOD WHO IS LOVE



The Bible reveals the mystery of who God is: God is love. God created us out of love, died for us out of love, and invites us on a journey of faith in which we live in his love. In this study, we’ll look at the God who is Love and how that love shows itself in the Trinity and the Faith.

LISTEN

THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES WITH DENNIS AND ANGELINA GIRARD

As we celebrate the Visitation this week, we invite you to pray the Joyful Mysteries alongside this spoken Rosary set to music. Enter into some of the most joy-filled moments of Our Lord Jesus Christ’s life, alongside the Blessed Virgin, through this devotional prayer and accompanying Scripture passages.



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Catholic

UPDATE

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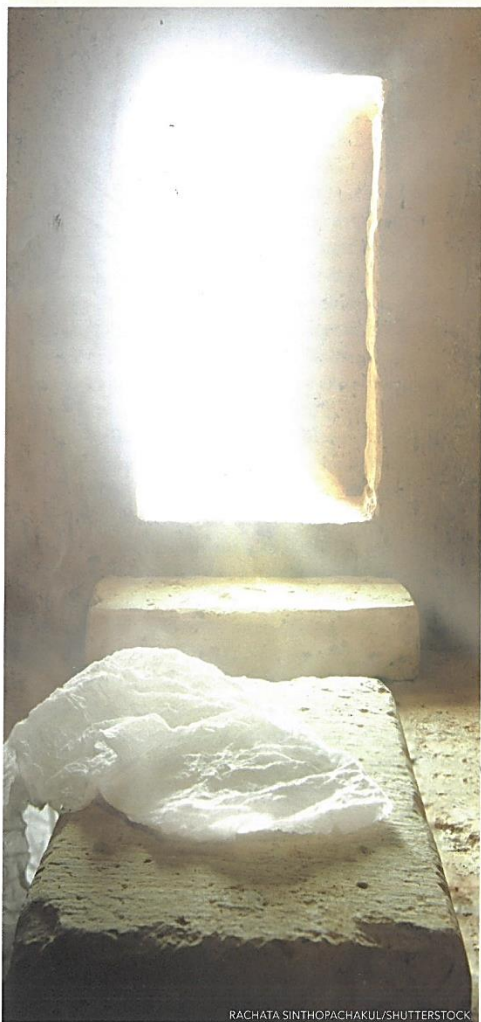
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HOW TO READ THE Resurrection Narratives

RAYMOND E. BROWN, SS



RACHATA SINTHOPACHAKUL/SHUTTERSTOCK

The resurrection of Christ is at the center of our faith. Paul affirms: "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). The Church devotes eight days of worship to celebrating the feast of the resurrection. From Easter Sunday to the following (Low) Sunday the readings at Masses present one by one the many New Testament accounts of the appearances of the risen Lord.

Our four Gospels, written twenty-five to sixty-five years after the resurrection, say what happened in ways so different that the Church wisely doesn't combine them all into one picture or prefer one Gospel account over the other. Each Gospel narrative should be allowed to contribute its own wealth to what we know and believe about Christ.

How were these stories formed? Why do they differ from each other? What can we learn from their diversity? In this *Update* we'll consider those questions. We should recognize that the Gospel accounts tell us what happened, enriched by insights acquired only after the early Christians looked back and put a whole series of events together.

STORIES TOLD IT BEST

Our Christian ancestors spoke about the resurrection long before they wrote about it. The first believers proclaimed the truth by word of mouth in forceful slogans and exclamations: "The Lord was raised indeed, and has appeared to Simon [Peter]" (Luke 24:34). In Jerusalem in particular, biting challenges are recalled associating the Crucifixion and the resurrection: "You crucified this Jesus...but God raised him up" (Acts 2:23-24, 4:10, 5:30-31, 10:39-40).

Four steps are mentioned by Paul in a formula delivered to him from the earliest days of his coming to faith: "That Christ *died*...that he was *buried*, that he was *raised* on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he *appeared*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-5). Paul explained what this sequence of events meant for both the Jews and Gentiles: Jesus was "put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification" (Romans 4:25). As vivid as these proclamations were, the story form proved to be a more effective way of conveying the full impact of the resurrection. It was important that the association between the Crucifixion and the resurrection was fleshed out in a dramatic way so that those who were not present in Jerusalem could understand what God had done in

EDITOR: ELIZABETH A. HERZING-GEHART • DESIGN: JOHN KRUS

making Jesus victorious over death. Consequently the Gospel stories are quite different from the brief formulas preserved for us from the early preaching.

These brief, spoken formulas never mentioned the finding of Jesus' empty tomb. Yet in all four Gospels the empty tomb becomes the important link between the Crucifixion and the resurrection—spotlighted as the site of the revelation that Jesus has conquered death. His followers saw his body placed in the tomb before the Sabbath began; but when the Sabbath was over, his body was no longer there. What happened?

Christians recognized that in itself the absence of the body did not prove divine intervention. At the moment of discovering the opened tomb, John 20:2 has Mary Magdalene conclude: "They"—presumably Jesus' enemies—"have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they put him." But to their amazement the followers of Jesus learned that no such human explanation sufficed. Jesus who had died appeared to them alive!

The appearances of the risen Jesus led Christians to a faith that enabled them to look back and see that the empty tomb itself already could be understood as a revelation that Jesus was no longer dead. The Gospel stories express that insight in a classical biblical manner. In the Old Testament at many significant moments God's communication is phrased by "an angel of the Lord"—a manifestation of God's presence in human form, constituting a bridge between heaven and earth. Such angels know God's plan and translate it into our language.

Accordingly in all four Gospels an angel or angels appear at the tomb to make the meaning of the empty tomb crystal clear. The Gospels vary in their descriptions of the angel(s)' appearance, whether there are one or two, and whether they are outside or inside the tomb, sitting or standing. These are the variations to be expected in a story transmitted orally. But the basic message of the angels is the same: *Jesus is no longer in the tomb because he has been raised!*

The empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus, then, are the two basic components of the Gospel narratives. They are reported in such a way that each casts light on the other to give a fuller understanding of the resurrection. The preaching formulas, like "The Lord is raised" or "God raised him up," did not explain how Jesus was victorious over death. Was the risen Jesus physical? Was he raised bodily?

Paul argues that what is raised is not "physical" (*psychikos*) but "a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). How is that subtle notion conveyed in narrative? Once the angelic message explains why the tomb is empty, the tomb tells us that Jesus was raised in such a way that *his body did not corrupt*. In Jerusalem even those who refused to believe in Jesus never claimed they could point out his remains or skeleton in a burial place.

From another aspect, the way in which the appearances are described tells us that the resurrection was *no mere resuscitation* of Jesus to ordinary life. When the risen Jesus appeared, he was not easily recognizable even to those who knew him well (for example, Mary Magdalene and Simon Peter). He could pass through locked doors; cover distances instantaneously; and yet he still pointed to his body as real. Thus there is no evidence whatsoever that early preaching ever involved anything other than *a bodily resurrection that involved tremendous transformation*.

THE DIFFERENT GOSPEL NARRATIVES

According to the ancient tradition in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, Jesus appeared to Cephas (Simon Peter; see Luke 24:34), to the Twelve, to more than 500, to James and all the apostles. Paul adds that Jesus appeared "last of all to me" (15:8). There can be little doubt, then, that there was tradition of a number of appearances; yet these were past and continued no longer. But where and when did they occur? What took place during them? And when did they stop? None of that is specified. The Gospel stories answer those questions but the answers sometimes vary.

Here we encounter most clearly the pastoral genius of the evangelists. Each was addressing a different audience, and in recounting Jesus' public ministry each had emphasized aspects that spoke to the need of that special audience. Accordingly now each evangelist draws something from the tradition of the appearances of the risen Jesus that ties in clearly with what has been recounted in the body of his Gospel. Thus the readers (or hearers) of the Gospel could see how the resurrection fitted consistently into the whole portrayal of Jesus. Very briefly let us look at the Gospels one by one, treating them in the probable order in which they were written.

Mark's Narrative(s)

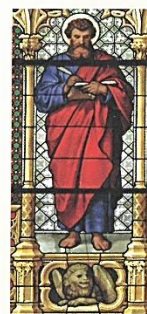
Most scholars recognize that Mark's original narrative consisted of 16:1-8. Because of the brief, almost unfinished character of that account, however, early Christians added other endings. The best known of these is Mark 16:9-20. Thus we may speak of two "Marcan" accounts of the resurrection.

Mark 16:1-8, which is basically the story of the empty tomb, contains the heavenly revelation that Jesus is risen and promises his appearance in Galilee to the other disciples and Peter. Yet that appearance is never described, and the story ends with the women leaving the tomb afraid and silent.

Only through suffering will the disciples reach fuller understanding. Throughout the Gospel Mark emphasizes how difficult it was for those who followed Jesus to believe in him fully because they did not understand that suffering and rejection were an essential part of the identity of God's Son. In the great trial of Jesus' passion the male disciples have all failed and run away—an experience that reflects fear and shameful weakness. But their pain leads to light. After they have suffered and failed Jesus will appear to them in Galilee (Mark 14:27-28).

The women followers of Jesus, spared the Gethsemane trial where the disciples fell asleep and fled, looked on from a distance at the Crucifixion. They too must experience the difficulty of faith; even after they are told of the resurrection, they do not automatically become proclaimers of Jesus' victory. Rather they flee in silence and fear (Mark 16:8).

That is not a bad warning for Christians today. Our faith has come to us from others who have passed on to us the revelation of what God has done, but the fact that we have accepted that proclamation does not mean that we have full Christian faith. Even after the resurrection we may have to carry the cross and experience suffering and rejection before we reach a real understanding of the Jesus in whom we say we believe.



Faith comes from a personal understanding of the risen Lord. Of course Mark does not mean that the women were permanently silent and afraid. The added ending (Mark 16:9–20) recognizes that point by showing how, not only for the women but also for other followers, an encounter with the risen Jesus brought about faith. In each case that personal encounter accomplished what a message received from others could not. We also hear how those whom Jesus upbraids for lack of faith and hardness of heart are entrusted with preaching the gospel to the whole world. These are messages pertinent to our own lives. No amount of hearing about Jesus ever substitutes for a personal experience of him, and neither then nor now was the task of bringing others to Christ entrusted only to the saintly perfect. Mark's Gospel reminds us that Jesus' first disciples were struggling human beings like ourselves.

Matthew's Narrative

As always Matthew, although he draws on Mark, is the more skilled teacher, kinder to readers who do not always see implications. Mark 16:1–8 does not *actually* describe appearances of the risen Jesus, but Matthew does. Thus in 28:9 he tells of an appearance to the women after they left the tomb—an appearance (echoed in John and Mark 16:9) that may well represent ancient tradition even though it was never part of the official preaching (such as reported by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15).



An attempt to block the resurrection of Jesus. Even more dramatically, in Matthew 27:62–66, 28:4, 11–15 we are told of a scheme to frustrate the resurrection by getting Pilate's soldiers to guard Jesus' tomb. One of the tragic elements in Matthew's Christian experience is a hostile relationship between synagogue authorities and Christian believers. That is reflected from start to finish in Matthew's Gospel.

At the very beginning of his Gospel, Matthew portrayed King Herod, the chief priests and the scribes plotting to destroy the newly born Messiah (2:3–5, 16–18, 20); but God frustrated them. So now at the end of the Gospel, Matthew portrays the prefect Pilate, the chief priests and the Pharisees plotting against Jesus. Once more God intervenes to frustrate them. Though the polemic attitude behind this story should not be imitated, Matthew reminds us that the Christian proclamation of the gospel will not be without struggle.

Jesus in Galilee promises to be "with us" always. Last of all Matthew describes what Mark only promised: the appearance of Jesus to the disciples (the Eleven) in Galilee. In Matthew's opening of the public ministry in Galilee (chapters 5 through 7) Jesus delivered on a mountain a "sermon" that contained the essentials of his new teaching about the Kingdom of God. In 10:6–7 Jesus sent his disciples to preach that kingdom "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Now from Galilee the risen Jesus sends his disciples forth to teach "all nations" making them disciples by baptizing them.

Matthew's community has seen this shift from Jews to Gentiles in the focus of the ministry. Yet Matthew is careful to show that God's plan for Jesus was consistent from beginning

to end. The revelation given about Jesus before he was born proclaimed that he would be Emmanuel ("God with us," 1:23); Jesus' last words are "I am with you all days to the end of time" (28:20).

Luke's Narrative

Like Matthew, Luke follows Mark in the basic story of the empty tomb, but then goes his own way in the appearances he reports. While Matthew recounts an appearance of Jesus in Jerusalem to two women, Luke recounts at length (24:13–35) the appearance of Jesus to two male disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. In the Acts of the Apostles (2:42, 46, 20:7, 11), which Luke also authored as a sequel to his Gospel account, he will point to the role of "the breaking of the bread" in Christian community life. He prepares for that in the Emmaus story by having the disciples recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.



This is still an important theme for our life as believers today since the Eucharistic breaking of the bread constitutes one of our principal ways of encountering the presence of the risen Jesus—a unique presence different from all others.

Luke sees the resurrection as fulfilling the Scriptures. Then Luke turns to the appearance of the risen Jesus to the Eleven. More than either Mark or Matthew, Luke stresses what was already implicit in the empty tomb: the reality of the body of the risen Jesus who was not simply a spirit (24:37–43). Particularly significant is that the risen Jesus teaches the Eleven about his death and resurrection by *explaining the Scriptures*, "All the things written about me in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms must be fulfilled" (24:44).

Already the two disciples on the road to Emmaus found their hearts burning when he opened to them the Scriptures, but now this has become a major theme. Once again Luke's emphasis is preparing the way for the Church life he will describe in his Acts of the Apostles, where Peter, Stephen and Paul begin their preaching by emphasizing that the Scriptures anticipate what happened to Jesus (Acts 2:14–21, 7:1–50, 13:16–22).

Luke spotlights Jerusalem as the setting for Jesus' appearances and ascension. Matthew has the appearance of the risen Jesus to the Eleven take place in Galilee. This region was a fitting selection from the tradition for Matthew's purpose since for him Galilee is the land of the Gentiles (4:15) and Jesus after his resurrection is instructing his disciples to go and make disciples of the Gentiles (28:19).

Luke has the appearance to the Eleven take place in Jerusalem. This was a fitting selection from the tradition for his purpose. For him the Gospel began with the appearance of Gabriel to Zechariah in the Jerusalem Temple; now it ends with Jesus' disciples in the Temple blessing God.

Most of us are familiar with the imagery at the beginning of Acts (1:3, 9–12) where Jesus ascends into heaven from the Mount of Olives forty days after the resurrection. Yet at the very end of the Gospel (24:50–51) Luke has him ascend into heaven from the same region on Easter Sunday night.

In this "double exposure" we see Luke's theological

perceptivity. In one sense (dramatically portrayed in the Gospel) *Jesus' return to God was the end of his earthly career*, a career beginning and ending in Jerusalem and thus symbolically lived within the confines of Judaism. In another sense (dramatically portrayed in Acts) *Jesus' return to God begins the life of the Church* that starts in Jerusalem (Judaism) and extends to Rome (the Gentile world).

John's Narrative

The account in chapter 20 of John, like Luke and Mark 16:9–20, has the appearances of Jesus take place in Jerusalem. The account in chapter 21 (which is only superficially connected to chapter 20), like Matthew and Mark 16:7, has the appearance of Jesus take place in Galilee. Each chapter is appropriate to John's thought, but in a different way.

John's Gospel narrates a series of encounters as character after character comes to meet Jesus in center stage and react to him. This atmosphere continues in chapter 20 where sequentially Peter and the Beloved Disciple, Mary Magdalene, the disciples and Thomas encounter the mystery of Jesus' resurrection.

The Beloved Disciple is the first to believe. In the tradition (1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34), Simon Peter was the first among the male disciples of Jesus to see the risen Jesus. John does not violate that but still exemplifies his peculiar emphasis: throughout the latter part of the Gospel the unnamed Beloved Disciple, the one particularly loved by Jesus, is closer than Peter to the master. In 20:3–10 where Peter and the Beloved Disciple go to the tomb, neither sees Jesus; but the Beloved Disciple comes to faith without an appearance of the Risen One.

Mary Magdalene is the first to proclaim the risen Lord. As in Matthew and the added ending of Mark, Mary Magdalene is the first follower to see the risen Jesus. She does not recognize him by sight but does when he calls her name, fulfilling the prediction of the Good Shepherd in 10:3–5 that he would call by name the sheep that belong to him and they would follow him. Jesus speaks to her of "my Father and your Father" and refers to his disciples as his "brothers." Thus to Magdalene Jesus fulfills the promise in John's Prologue (1:12): "All those who did accept him he empowered to become God's children." With this revelation Mary goes forth to announce, "I have seen the Lord." If the Beloved Disciple was the first to believe, Mary becomes the first to proclaim the Risen Lord.

Jesus' disciples are "recreated" by the Holy Spirit. Next (20:19–23) Jesus appears to the group of disciples, consisting of or including members of the Twelve. Just as in Genesis 2:7 the Lord God formed a human being out of the dust of the earth by breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, so Jesus breathes on the disciples and they receive the Holy Spirit, recreating them as God's children with eternal life. For them this is the birth of the Spirit promised in John 3:5. Throughout the Gospel Jesus has referred to himself as the one sent by God; the disciples are now sent to continue his work in the world with his power over evil and sin.



Thomas the Doubter

The various Gospels mention doubt when Jesus appears to his followers after the resurrection (Matthew 28:17; Luke 24:37–38; Mark 16:14), but in 20:24–29 John dramatizes that doubt in an individual. Paradoxically, however, from the lips of this "doubting Thomas" comes the highest confession of faith in all the Gospels: "My Lord and my God." The Gospel began with the Prologue's affirmation (1:1), "The Word was God." Now human beings have come to recognize that.

Peter as missionary and pastor. Chapter 21 moves the setting to Galilee and highlights two scenes related to Simon Peter's career. A miraculous catch of fish directed by the risen Jesus is dragged ashore by Peter, a symbol of the missionary role he will have. But then abruptly the symbolism shifts as Peter is commissioned to feed Jesus' sheep.

The shift reflects Christian experience: A great missionary thrust in the first generations eventually ceded to pastoral care for those brought to Christ. John's stress on Jesus as the unique "Good Shepherd" has slowed the acceptance of human shepherds in the Johannine community; but when through the symbolism of Peter a shepherding role is authenticated, very Johannine conditions are attached. Peter must love Jesus and the sheep do not become his—they still belong to Jesus.

The final focus on the Beloved Disciple. The last word of Jesus, however, is not about Peter but about the Beloved Disciple. He is given no role of authority, but he retains a primacy in being loved, which is more important in this Gospel. It is to this Disciple that is held open the possibility of being there when Jesus returns. Symbolically that would be the final fruit of the resurrection: a believing community of Christian's disciples that would remain until the last days.

DIVERSE MESSAGES

We come back to the important pastoral question with which we began: What can we learn from the fact that the Gospel accounts of the resurrection differ from each other? The answer is centered in the risen Jesus as God's ultimate revelation directed to all times and places. The evangelists shaped the resurrection Narratives to be meaningful to audiences of differing lifestyles and backgrounds in the first century.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever; but the world addressed by God's revelation in Christ is varied indeed. The Church of our century cannot present a different Christ. But by the way it preserves the varied Gospel messages, it lets Jesus speak to the differing needs of the audiences of our times.

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Raymond E. Brown, SS, was a Catholic priest, a member of the Sulpician Fathers, and a prominent biblical scholar. Fr. Brown died in 1998.

IMPRIMATUR: +CARL K. MOEDDEL, VG, AND AUXILIARY BISHOP, ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI, JANUARY 3, 1994.

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07/19