

16 MAY 2021

Sunday Message

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 3

JUST AN EMPTY TOMB?

(MARK 16:15-20)

The original Gospel of Mark ends very abruptly: the women visit the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning, find it empty, encounter a young man (angel) who informs them that Jesus is risen and they are to tell the disciples to go to Galilee, where they will encounter him; the terrified women run away from the tomb “and they said nothing to a soul, for they were afraid...”

Hardly an appropriate ending for a book which opens with the phrase, “The Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God”? So a certain scribe seems to have thought at some point in the second century and added a collection of material from other sources, thus bringing Mark’s version into line with the mainstream Gospel tradition. Matthew’s version ends with Jesus revealing himself to the 11 remaining disciples in Galilee in much the same way as related in our reading, but without any mention of his ascension, whereas Luke relates this event in two dramatic accounts, one at the end of his gospel story, the other at the beginning of his book of Acts of the Apostles, both located in or near Jerusalem.

The Ascension is the other side of the Easter mystery to the empty tomb: the latter tells us that the body of Jesus, which the women observed being placed in the tomb, is no longer there but cannot give a reason for its absence; the appearances of the risen Jesus, including the Ascension, tell us that he is the same person whom the disciples knew before the crucifixion, but now existing in a different, transformed way. Without this second factor, Jesus’ resurrection could be understood as a resuscitation or even, as some people have suggested, that he did not really die on the cross at all. ■

REFLECT

One of the unfortunate characteristics of biblical narrative is that so many of the women who feature in the stories remain anonymous. In our gospel reading today, for example, the four male disciple companions of Jesus are identified by name, but we have no such complementary detail about Peter’s mother-in-law. Mark tells us that when she rose from her sick-bed, she began “to wait on them”: this is the verb usually translated as ‘to serve’, and the only human beings who are mentioned as ‘serving’ in the Gospel tradition are women. Jesus uses the term in his teaching on leadership, that among the disciples the leader is one who ‘serves’, not one who rules or dominates. Another point we might notice is that the verb in question comes from the same root as the noun which gives us the English word ‘deacon’.

We later find that the women are the link witness element in the crucial events of Jesus’ death, burial and the events at the tomb of Jesus on Easter morning, after the male disciples had abandoned him in Gethsemane.

In any discussion about the ministry of women in the Church, we might take the New Testament evidence into account, especially Paul’s remark that through baptism, there is now “no longer male nor female” in Christ (Gal 3:28). We also should distinguish those customs which belong to historical and cultural systems or prejudice and which have little to do with the revealed Word of God. ■

LEARN

Our gospel reading today comes from what is known as the ‘Markan Appendix’: this section did not form part of the original text.

Apart from this reference, Luke is the only evangelist who describes the Ascension as a distinct event.

Jesus is still *Emmanuel*, ‘God-with-us’, as he tells the disciples (and ourselves) at the end of Matthew’s account.

DO

When you are out and about, notice the escalator or lift in the shopping centre or some such place. Think of the Ascension of Jesus as a way of expressing our belief in the Resurrection, not as a final departure.



SAY

**I am with you always,
yes to the end of time.**

(Matthew 28:20)

SWINFORD (F12 YH57) MEELICK (F12 AY23) MIDFIELD (F12 AX29)
Fr Dermot Meehan Phone: 094-9251790/Urgent Calls: 087-1338200

PARISH OFFICE- OPENING HOURS: Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm; Phone: 094 - 9253607
Email: swinfordparish@gmail.com 16th -23rd May 2021

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Saturday 15th	6.30pm	Swinford: Bridget & Michael Muldowney, Cashelsheenaughane Eileen & Patrick McLoughlin, Derryronane & dec'd McLoughlin & Durkan Families Gary Price, Cullane
Sunday 16th	12 noon	Swinford: Bridie Moran, Brabazon Heights (MM) Jane & Joe Gallagher, their sons David, Rathscanlon & Brendan, Clondra Longford & their grandson Kevin Tom Loftus, Davitt Place
Monday 17th	10.00am	Swinford: Bernadette Hennigan, her brother Andrew Kelly & their parents Douglas & Patricia Kelly
Tuesday 18th	10.00am	Swinford: Special Intention
Wednesday 19th	10.00am	Swinford: Michael Lynch, his parents Thomas & Bridie, his sisters Margaret & Anne & Paddy & Teresa Brennan & dec'd Brennan & Mulligan Families
Thursday 20th	10.00am	Swinford: No Intention
Friday 21st	10.00am	Swinford: Anthoney & Bridget Gallagher, Carrowreagh & their grandson Simon McGovern Nuala McManus, Carracanada
Saturday 22nd	10.00am	Swinford: Patsy Maloney, Sancta Maria/London (MM)
PENTECOST SUNDAY		
Saturday 22nd	6.30pm	Swinford: Martin Dunne, his brother Bill, his sisters Neil, Bea & Kay & dec'd Dunne & Burke Families Willie Groarke, Rathdubh
Sunday 23rd	12 noon	Swinford: Fr Anthony Conlon Patrick & Eileen Cosgrove & their daughters Carmel & Pauline, Sancta Maria

Sunday 16th	9.00am	Meelick: Séan McHugh, Knockavilla
Sunday 23rd	9.00am	Meelick: John Mc Callion, Carnacross

Sunday 16th	10.30am	Midfield: Sarah & Mattie Kelly, Brackloon & their son Martin Martin & Winnie Gorman & dec'd Family, Woods
Sunday 23rd	10.30am	Midfield: The Kennedy, Jordan and McDonagh Families, Brackloon & Kinaffe & Bernard Cunningham

We welcome into the Christian community Éilis Mulligan, Cork and Bonnie Isabella Moore, Sancta Maria who were baptised recently in Swinford Church and Luca Bernard Wilhelm Borza, Tower View, Meelick who was baptised recently in Meelick Church.

Returning to our churches for Mass: It is wonderful that since Monday last we have again been able to gather in our churches to celebrate the Eucharist. We do so in accordance with Government and NPHE guidelines to ensure the health and safety of all. With that in mind the following is offered for your information: The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation remains suspended by the Irish Bishops until further notice.

- Those who can attend Mass on any day during the week are asked to consider attending on a weekday to leave Sunday free for those who can only attend then.
- Anyone who would like to come to Mass is asked to come in good time to allow for sanitising hands on entering the church. In each church there will be one designated door for entering the church. Churches will be open 30 minutes before Mass.
- In line with the guidelines to keep the church safe for all, each of our churches will have a maximum capacity. When this is reached, it will not be possible to let anyone else into the church. Please do not be offended if stewards tell you maximum capacity has been reached and you will not be allowed to enter the church
- Please follow the directions of the stewards at the church door and inside the church. In order to help the stewards determine the number of places available in the church, stewards will bring people to a seat. It will not be possible for people to choose their own seat.
- For receiving Holy Communion, please follow the directions given. People are asked to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
- After each Mass the church will be closed for cleaning and sanitising.

Coming back to church for Mass continues to be different for the moment and will ask patience, understanding and co-operation from us all.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock: This Sunday has been allotted to the dioceses of Achonry, Galway and Clonfert as a day of prayer at Our Lady's Shrine at Knock. To participate in the Mass and prayers on-line, please see the diocesan website www.achonrydiocese.org.

Volunteers needed: Our churches can open thanks to those who have volunteered to help with stewarding and especially with cleaning and sanitising our churches after each Mass. Sincere thanks to those who have volunteered to help in these important areas. Cleaning and sanitising is key to our churches remaining open. If you can help with cleaning in the church you attend, please contact Fr Dermot or Anne-Marie in the Parish Office. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Swinford Church on Thursdays between 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Anyone who can commit to an hour of adoration during those times on Thursdays is asked to contact Isabel Gallagher on 086 2151338. All are welcome to come and spend whatever time they can in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and experience the blessings and the peace of God's presence. **Arranging anniversary Masses:** To arrange anniversary Masses for deceased family members, please contact Anne-Marie in the Parish Office at 094 9253607 or at swinfordparish@gmail.com. As the capacity of each church is now limited, it is important that family members wishing to attend an anniversary Mass, particularly at weekends, come in good time to ensure that they will be able to get a seat in the church.

GAA 50/50: The club 50/50 draw was held in Horkans and Tadhg Kennedy of Swinford won €380. Envelopes are available in business premises in town and online through www.swinfordgaa.ie. The next draw will be in Lavins on the 18th May. The club will like to thank everyone for their support.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Men of Galilee, why gaze in wonder at the heavens?

This Jesus whom you saw ascending into heaven will return as you saw him go, 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

Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God,
and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving,

for the Ascension of Christ your Son is our exaltation,
and, where the Head has gone before in glory,
the Body is called to follow in hope.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Acts 1:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

In my earlier work, Theophilus, I dealt with everything Jesus had done and taught from the beginning until the day he gave his instructions to the apostles he had chosen through the Holy Spirit, and was taken up to heaven. He had shown himself alive to them after his Passion by many demonstrations: for forty days he had continued to appear to them and tell them about the kingdom of God. When he had been at table with them, he had told them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for what the Father had promised. "It is," he had said, "what you have heard me speak about: John baptised with water but you, not many days from now, will be baptised with the Holy Spirit."

Now having met together, they asked him, "Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know times or dates that the Father decided by his own authority, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth."

As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from

their sight. They were still staring into the sky when suddenly two men in white were standing near them and they said, "Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky? Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven, this same Jesus will come back in the same way as you have seen him go there."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Ps 46

Response:

God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.

or

Alleluia!

- All peoples, clap your hands,
cry to God with shouts of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, we must fear,
great king over all the earth. (R.)
- God goes up with shouts of joy;
the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.
Sing praise for God, sing praise,
sing praise to our king, sing praise. (R.)
- God is king of all the earth.
Sing praise with all your skill.
God is king over the nations;
God reigns on his holy throne. (R.)

SECOND READING

Eph 4:1-13

(For shorter form, read between > <)

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

>I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it.< It was said that he would:

When he ascended to the height, he captured prisoners,
he gave gifts to men.

When it says, "he ascended", what can it mean if not that he descended right down to the lower regions of the earth? The one who rose higher than all the heavens to fill all things is none other than the one who descended. And > to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.

The word of the Lord.<
Thanks be to God.

Alternative second reading

Eph 1:17-23

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Go, make disciples of all the nations;
I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mk 16:15-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus showed himself to the Eleven, and said to them, "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation. He who believes and is baptised will be saved; he who does not believe will be condemned. These are the signs that will be associated with believers: in my name they will cast out devils; they will have the gift of tongues; they will pick up snakes in their hands, and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover."

And so the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven: there at the right hand of God he took his place, while they, going out, preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that accompanied it.

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

We offer sacrifice now in supplication, O Lord,
to honour the wondrous Ascension of your Son:

grant, we pray,
that through this most holy exchange
we, too, may rise up to the heavenly realms.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Behold, I am with you always,
even to the end of the age, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Almighty ever-living God,
who allow those on earth to celebrate divine mysteries,
grant, we pray,
that Christian hope may draw us onward
to where our nature is united with you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.