



From +John...

Dear Friends,

I am always amused when at Christmas and Easter so many people say, *“this is of course your busy time of the year.”* I am amused because for me it is not. I celebrate the liturgies, prepare many homilies, but I never see it as busy. I see it as an incredible privilege to be with God’s people and to celebrate together, to remember what God is doing among us. I have always been fascinated by the words of St Paul to the Colossians; *“The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory.”* (Col 1: 27) Whatever we come together to celebrate, Christmas, Easter, Ordinary Sundays of the Year, Solemnities of Christ, Feasts of Our Lady, the Apostles, the Saints, whatever it is Christ is among us and we are remembering.

All liturgical prayer is an act of remembering. Specifically, for us Christians, this prayer remembers Christ’s saving mystery, the paschal Mystery. As mystery Christ’s saving act can never be exhausted. The wonderful thing about it is that over time, as the years go by and we celebrate another Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday we simply delve deeper and deeper into its richness and meaning. We come to understand the paschal mystery as Jesus’ passing through death to risen life. It’s true, it is that, but the mystery is much deeper and broader. The paschal mystery is not only about Christ, it is also about us.

St Paul makes it abundantly clear that at baptism we are plunged into what we call the paschal mystery (which actually doesn’t begin with Jesus death, but with His Incarnation).

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into this death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into his death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so too we might walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6: 3-4)

Over the coming days we will celebrate and remember the mystery of Jesus Christ passing from death to life. It is our mystery too. This mystery describes how we live from day to day as disciples of Jesus. This is who we are and how we are to live as faithful followers of Christ. It means that we

need to ask ourselves every day, probably several times a day: *“Am I living through Him and with Him and In Him.”*

When we can say from time to time *“Yes, I am living through Him and with Him and In Him,”* then we know *“The mystery is Christ among you, your hope of glory.”* (Col 1: 27)

With every blessing

+ John

Items of Interest

Clergy Prayer Day at the Church of St Thomas More Wilton, next Tuesday 27 March, led by Sisters Anne Powell and Clare O’Connor of the Cenacle. Gather at 10am for morning tea.

Annual Collection for the Holy Land This collection is to be taken up again this year on Good Friday. I have been reminded in a letter from Cardinal Sandri, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, that the New Zealand offerings are allocated for 20 University Scholarships and the Parish of Cana in Galilee. Please encourage people to give generously.

Retreat at Home of Compassion Island Bay 13-18 May This retreat to be facilitated by Fr Alan Roberts will go ahead even though there have not been many registrations. If anyone is interested please contact Fr David Dowling directly.

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Church - The Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments has notified us that the Monday after Pentecost is to be celebrated every year as the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, as decreed by Pope Francis on 11 February 2018.

We do not exist for ourselves alone, and it is only when we are fully convinced of this fact that we begin to love ourselves properly and thus also love others. What do I mean by loving ourselves properly? I mean, first of all, desiring to live, accepting life as a very great gift and a great good, not because of what it gives us, but because of what it enables us to give to others