



APRIL  
2021

# Stella Maris

SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS AROUND THE WORLD

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# Stella Maris is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 332 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world. We also run 53 seafarers' centres around the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.



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Stella Maris  
 provides seafarers  
 with practical  
 support, information  
 and a listening ear



# CEBU, PHILIPPINES

The Port of Cebu is located in Cebu City, Philippines. It serves the Metro Cebu Area and is the largest domestic port in the Philippines, mostly serving routes in the Visayas and Mindanao. It is composed of the Cebu International Port and the Domestic Zone with a monthly average of 49 ship calls for Cebu International port and 4,841 ship calls for domestic zone based on the 2019 statistics. Cebu was historically an important strategic center for both traders from Southern China and later the Spaniards who colonized the country. But the Port of Cebu has also been a physical witness of the unfolding of important events especially the Christianization of the Philippines with the arrival of the Spaniards.

2021 is a significant year of the Catholic Church in the Philippines as it celebrates the 500 Years of the Arrival of Christianity. Cebu is seen as the cradle of Christianity as it was the place where the great sailor and explorer Ferdinand Magellan first arrived on April 4, 1521, who planted the Cross which is now known as Magellan's Cross. According to Magellan's Chronicler Antonio Pegafitta it was Ferdinand Magellan himself who began teaching the basics of the Christian faith to the leaders and inhabitants of the place.

Nowadays, Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), both land or sea-based Filipino workers, are spread all over the world either indefinitely as citizens or as permanent or temporary residents of a different country. OFWs also include those Filipino citizens abroad for a limited but definite period which includes

the 500 thousand seafarers on ocean sea-going vessels.

OFWs, who are in more than 193 countries, take and practice their faith fervently wherever they are or go. In fact, OFWs are in more than 193 countries. That is why the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines deem OFWs as modern apostles of evangelization in the foreign countries where they go to work or emigrate.

Here in Cebu, centuries later another foreign missionary, Fr. Roland Doriol, SJ (a Jesuit priest and seafarer), established the Apostleship of the Sea in order to make the Church more visible in the life of seafarers and other people of the sea. Whilst working on board ships he had encountered many Filipino seafarers who were the ones invited him to come to the Philippines and reach out to the Filipino seafarers and families.

In 1991 his work began with the students at the maritime school of the University of Cebu but, in order to get closer to active seafarers both on inter-island and ocean-going vessels, the idea of creating a seaman's centre emerged. The second "Stella Maris Seaman's Centre" of the Philippines was then officially inaugurated in 1993.

In 2002, the ITF Seafarers' Trust granted funds to build a new Stella Maris Seafarers' Centre building

that was inaugurated on April 29, 2004. It's a four-storey building with around 20 private and dormitory rooms with amenities such as basketball on the front yard, fitness gym, hall for social gatherings, study room, chapel at the roof deck with a nice view of the port so that the seafarers can enjoy their stay while away from home. Since then, thousands of seafarers and families have been accommodated and served by the centre. The current centre serves as the place of other programmes and services of the Apostleship of the Sea that provide pastoral care to the seafarers on board ships or seafarers on vacation, their families, the students of nautical institutes, the port workers, personnel and also fishers.

Stella Maris, Cebu, undertakes regular ship visits, hospital and home visits, human and spiritual development programmes, legal counselling. There are also links with various government and non-governmental agencies that provide welfare to seafarers.

In 2021, Stella Maris-Cebu celebrates 30 years. Day to day, the ministry strives to make the loving presence of the church be felt by the people of the sea it is serving.

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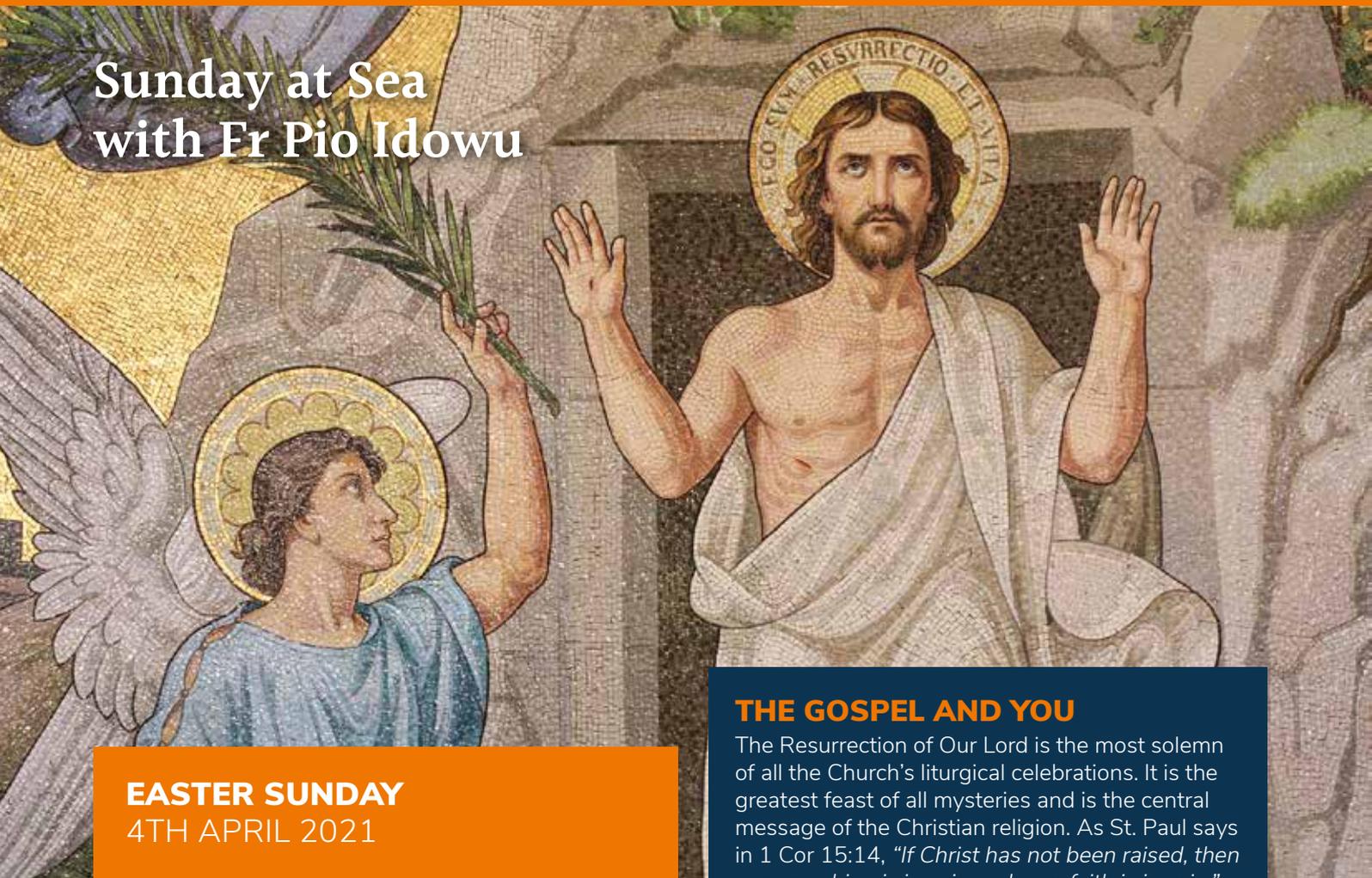
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# Sunday at Sea with Fr Pio Idowu



**EASTER SUNDAY**  
4TH APRIL 2021

## GOSPEL JOHN 20:1-9

On the first day of the week,  
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was  
still dark,  
and saw that the stone had been taken away from  
the tomb.  
So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the  
other disciple,  
the one whom Jesus loved,  
and said to them,  
“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,  
and we do not know where they have laid him.”  
Peter then came out with the other disciple,  
and they went toward the tomb.  
They both ran,  
but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb  
first; and  
stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there,  
but he did not go in.  
Then Simon Peter came, following him,  
and went into the tomb;  
he saw the linen cloths lying,  
and the napkin, which had been on his head,  
not lying with the linen cloths  
but rolled up in a place by itself.  
Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first,  
also went in,  
and he saw and believed;  
for as yet they did not know the Scripture,  
that he must rise from the dead.

## THE GOSPEL AND YOU

The Resurrection of Our Lord is the most solemn of all the Church’s liturgical celebrations. It is the greatest feast of all mysteries and is the central message of the Christian religion. As St. Paul says in 1 Cor 15:14, “If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.” If Christ is not risen from the dead, there is no reason for us to celebrate His Resurrection. But here we are, celebrating the Risen Lord.

What does Our Lord accomplish by his Resurrection? By rising from the dead, He calls us to new life. In early times, those to be received into the Church were baptised during the Easter Vigil, after having received a careful preparation. And it is in Baptism that we reproduce the death and resurrection of Our Lord.

In Baptism, we die to sin and rise up to new life. This sacrament is wonderful because it destroys sin in the soul and cancels the debt due to sin. The newly baptised Christian receives a new life of grace. But unfortunately, our bodies still contain the roots of sin. What this then means is that we must continuously die to sin to live in the new life of grace. St. Paul in his Letter to the Colossians exhorts us: “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5).

This dying to oneself in order to live the new life in Christ is a lifelong task. If we persevere, this new life will reach its perfection in heaven. The new life of grace we receive in Christ must be cared for and nourished, just as our physical bodies need care and nourishment. And grace is nourished by a frequent and fervent reception of the sacraments in which we make acts of faith, hope and charity.

## DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

### 11TH APRIL 2021

### GOSPEL JOHN 20:19-31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.



### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Today we celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy. St. Faustina, a Polish nun, was privileged to receive apparitions from Our Lord Jesus in which He emphasizes His mercy toward sinners. In one of these apparitions, Jesus said to her: "Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy. ... Proclaim that mercy is the greatest attribute of God."

Pope John Paul II, speaking on the object of this Feast, explains that in "this Second Sunday of Easter, the liturgy invites us to reflect specifically on divine mercy, which overcomes all human limitations and shines forth in the darkness of evil and sin. The Church urges us to have trust as we approach Christ, who through his Death and Resurrection fully and definitively reveals the extraordinary riches of God's merciful love."

Our Lord promised to St. Faustina that those who go to Confession and receive Holy Communion today will receive not only forgiveness of their sins, but the total remission of all temporal punishment.

Our attitude should be one of total trust in the Divine Mercy. These are the words of Jesus to St. Faustina: "The soul that will go to Confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment. On that day all the divine floodgates through which grace flow are opened. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me, even though its sins be as scarlet. My mercy is so great that no mind, be it of man or of angel, will be able to fathom it throughout all eternity."

Going to confession and receiving Communion on this day must go hand in hand with other things. We must also be merciful. To St. Faustina, Jesus said: "You are to show mercy to your neighbours always and everywhere. You must not shrink from this or try to excuse or absolve yourself from it. I am giving you three ways of exercising mercy toward your neighbour: the first – by deed, the second – by word, the third – by prayer. In these three degrees is contained the fullness of mercy and it is an unquestionable proof of love for Me"

## THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

### 18TH APRIL 2021

#### GOSPEL LUKE 24:35-48

At that time:

The two disciples told what had happened on the road, and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

As they were saying this,

Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you."

But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit.

And he said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts?

See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see;

for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have."

And when he had said this

he showed them his hands and his feet.

And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them,

"Have you anything here to eat?"

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.

Then he said to them,

"These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you,

that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled."

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them,

"Thus it is written,

that the Christ should suffer

and on the third day rise from the dead,

and that repentance and forgiveness of sins

should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

You are witnesses of these things."

#### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Today's Gospel recounts the apparition of the Risen Lord to two of his disciples who were on their way to Emmaus. This apparition happened on the very same day Jesus rose from the dead. The two disciples were talking about the recent events of the Lord's crucifixion and it seems that they were trying to find a meaning, an explanation of everything that had happened. The Gospel tells us that as they were conversing and debating, Jesus himself drew near and walked with them, though they did not recognise him.

A spiritual author makes this comment: *"Our whole life is a continuous journey toward God, and we are often sad, even as they were, because we do not succeed in finding Him, because, not understanding His mysterious ways, it seems that He has abandoned us."* For many souls, the journey of faith is an arduous one, immersed in darkness. In this darkness of faith, the soul is afflicted because it feels abandoned by God. We read in the life of Mother Teresa of Calcutta that for the last fifty years of her life, she was tormented by a deep sense of God's absence. She felt abandoned by God, just like these two disciples on their way to Emmaus.

But it is in the obscurity of faith that God draws closer to the soul. Jesus drew near to the disciples and walked with them. It is in those moments of doubt, temptation and trial that we are closest to Jesus. In these moments we do not perceive His presence, but God is very much close to us, guiding us by the hand through the darkness that surrounds us.

And when we finally recognise Him, let us pray that we may never have the misfortune of losing His abiding presence. Let us imitate the example of the disciples who urged Our Lord to remain with them: *"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."*



## FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

### 25TH APRIL 2021

#### GOSPEL JOHN 10:11-18

At that time:

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd.  
The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.  
He who is a hireling and not a shepherd,  
whose own the sheep are not,  
sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees;  
and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.  
He flees because he is a hireling  
and cares nothing for the sheep.  
I am the good shepherd;  
I know my own and my own know me,  
as the Father knows me and I know the Father;  
and I lay down my life for the sheep.  
And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold;  
I must bring them also,  
and they will heed my voice.  
So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.  
For this reason the Father loves me,  
because I lay down my life, that I may take it again.  
No one takes it from me,  
but I lay it down of my own accord.  
I have power to lay it down,  
and I have power to take it again;  
this charge I have received from my Father."



#### THE GOSPEL AND YOU

Today is called Good Shepherd Sunday and on this Sunday, the Church calls us to reflect on the meaning of God's call for each of us and to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to the consecrated life

The Gospel reading for today, taken from St John, is part of a public address given by Our Lord Jesus Christ just before His triumphant entry into Jerusalem and his subsequent Passion and Death on the Cross. Jesus is not talking to his followers. His words are addressed to the Pharisees who have just seen Him restore the sight of a blind man. In the previous chapter we have the account of Jesus healing a man born blind. This miraculous cure happened on a Sabbath, and the Pharisees, who interrogated the man afterwards, wanted nothing to do with Jesus. They considered themselves to be the spiritual leaders of the Jewish people, but in reality, they were false shepherds seeking only their own gain. And Jesus rebukes them, using the imagery of the Good Shepherd. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd

who, unlike the leaders of Israel, is willing to lay down his life for the sheep and lead them to the pastures of eternal life. And by calling Himself the Good Shepherd, Jesus wishes to manifest His love and concern for each of us.

For the Jews, the word 'shepherd' was a synonym for selfless love, sincerity, commitment and sacrificial service. The Good Shepherd leads the sheep to the pasture providing them with food and water. He keeps watch over the sheep, not allowing them to get lost in the desert or become victims of robbers and wild animals. The Good Shepherd goes in search of the lost ones, brings them back to the flock and tends their wounds. And if necessary, he is ready to lay down his life for his sheep.

All of these things were done by Jesus for us. He died to save us. He died so that we may have life. What generosity the Lord has shown towards us! What love, what mercy! In gratitude to Our loving Saviour, may we be generous in our love and dedication to Him.

# HEPATITIS A

Hepatitis A is a liver disease which is spread by contaminated food and water. It can also be spread from the hands of a person with Hepatitis and more rarely spread through sexual contact.



## Key facts

### Hepatitis A:

- is a viral liver disease that can cause mild to severe illness.
- virus (HAV) is transmitted through ingestion of contaminated food and water or through direct contact with an infectious person.
- Almost everyone recovers fully from Hepatitis A with a lifelong immunity. However, a very small proportion of people infected with Hepatitis A could die from severe Hepatitis A.
- infection is associated with a lack of safe water, and poor sanitation and personal hygiene (such as dirty hands) and oral-anal sex.
- A safe and effective vaccine is available to prevent Hepatitis A.

## Health risks

Hepatitis A is a common infection among people travelling to countries with poor sanitation and lack of safe water supply. Unlike Hepatitis B and C, Hepatitis A does not cause chronic liver disease and is rarely fatal, but it can cause debilitating symptoms and fulminant hepatitis (acute liver failure), which is often fatal.

## Symptoms

- Symptoms of Hepatitis A range from mild to severe, and can include fever, malaise, loss of appetite.
- Some patients can have diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark-coloured urine and Jaundice (a yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes).
- Not everyone who is infected will have all the symptoms.
- Adults have signs and symptoms of illness more often than children. The severity of disease and fatal outcomes are higher in older age groups. Infected children under 6 years of age do not usually experience noticeable symptoms.
- Hepatitis A sometimes relapses. The person who just recovered falls sick again with another acute episode. This is, however, followed by recovery.

## Treatment

- There is no specific treatment for Hepatitis A. Recovery from symptoms following infection may be slow and may take several weeks or months.
- Most important is the avoidance of unnecessary medications. Acetaminophen / Paracetamol and medication against vomiting should not be given.
- Therapy is aimed at maintaining comfort and adequate nutritional balance, including replacement of fluids that are lost from vomiting and diarrhoea.

## Prevention

- Improved sanitation, food safety and immunization are the most effective ways to combat Hepatitis A.
- Adequate supplies of safe drinking water and proper disposal of sewage within communities can reduce the spread of Hepatitis A. If you are unsure about the safety of the water supply, only drink bottled water that is properly sealed.
- Personal hygiene practices such as regular hand washing before meals and after going to the bathroom.
- Several injectable inactivated Hepatitis A vaccines, which are nearly 100% effective, are available internationally. All are similar in terms of how well they protect people from the virus and their side effects. No vaccine is licensed for children younger than 1 year of age.



You can keep yourself updated on Hepatitis A infection on the WHO website.

Courtesy of ITF Seafarers [www.itfseafarers.org](http://www.itfseafarers.org)



# DISCOVERING THE PASCHAL MYSTERY

**The Paschal mystery is the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ by which he heals us from sin and enables us to become children of God.**

## The Passion of Jesus

The Passion refers to the sacrificial suffering and death of Jesus Christ by crucifixion on Mount Calvary. Jesus foretold these events and made it clear to his disciples that he would suffer freely for the salvation of the world (Mt 20:18-19).

After his Last Supper, Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane outside the walls of Jerusalem. He was tried, found guilty and then handed over to Pontius Pilate who had him crucified. He was scourged, crowned with thorns and led to the hill of Calvary carrying his cross. He died between two thieves. As he died he said, *"It is accomplished"* (Jn 19:30).

## What is the atonement?

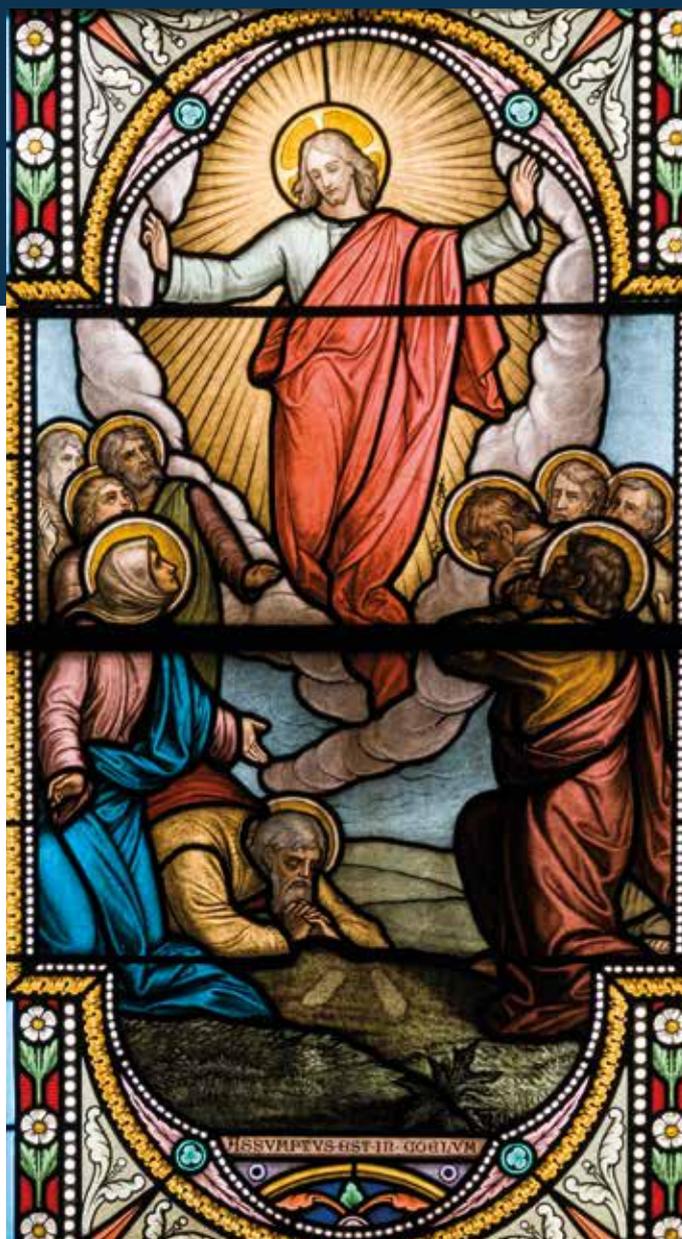
The word 'atonement' describes how Christ's action saves us. The word implies both a repayment for our sins (*to atone*) and a reunion of God and humanity (making *at-one*). The atonement is accomplished through a sacrificial petition offered by Christ to God, the divine love of which utterly revokes the offence of all sins and bears the pain and cost of sin in itself. Only a person who was truly divine, human and innocent could make such an effective sacrifice on our behalf.

## The Resurrection of Jesus

### What is the Resurrection?

The Resurrection is the bodily rising of Jesus Christ from the dead after three days in the tomb. St Peter states that Jesus rose physically: *"[we] ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead"* (Ac 10:41), but his glorified body had extraordinary new abilities. He appeared at different times and places, and his body, though glorified and transformed in appearance, still bore the wounds of the crucifixion (Jn 20:28).

The physicality of the Resurrection of Jesus, witnessed by so many, rules out the claim that only Jesus' soul or ghost returned, or that only his message lived on, or that he merely revived, or that it was all an elaborate hoax.



## The importance of the Resurrection for us

By his Resurrection, Jesus confirmed the validity of all he taught and did, showed that human life does not cease with death and manifested the reality of a glorified risen humanity.

## What is the Ascension?

The Ascension is Jesus' physical departure from his disciples. This event took place after forty days of appearances and teaching following his Resurrection. Scripture records him ascending to heaven, which signifies the *"definitive entrance of Jesus' humanity into God's heavenly domain"* (ccc. 665). Jesus is now in heaven, where he intercedes and prepares a place for us, and from where he shall come again at the end of time.

Extract from Credo by Fr Andrew Pinsent and Fr Marcus Holden, courtesy of the Catholic Truth Society



## Easter Prayer

O Divine Saviour, who rose from the dead on that first glorious Easter morning, grant that I may rise from my sins and so live as to see You, glorious and immortal, in heaven. Amen



STELLA MARIS

Stella Maris is the largest ship-visiting network in the world. We improve the lives of seafarers and fishers through our network of local chaplains and seafarer centres, expert information, advocacy, and spiritual support.



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