

## The Joyful Mysteries Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

### Fifth Joyful Mystery: Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple



*'Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he [Jesus] was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it...Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and replies.'* (Lk 2:41-50)

Pray to St. Anthony! Glasses, phone, TV Remote, wallet and purse; whatever you may have lost ask St. Anthony and he will find it. Every good Catholic knows this piece of wisdom, even the pagan and lapsed. The prayer that is sometimes recited to this miracle working Saint is, ***"Saint Anthony, please look around; something is lost and must be found."***



Where does this tradition come from for invoking the intercession of St. Anthony? One story that has been handed down from generation to generation begins with the theft of a book. This book was the prayer book of Anthony which he would use daily as it contained the psalms. The words of the psalms allowed him to praise God, to feel His Presence and to reflect on his relationship with the Lord. The words of the prayer book were oxygen for his spiritual lungs. Every syllable, nuance and sound was straight from the life giving breath of God.

Anthony's sadness and grief at losing his prayer book became so intense that day and night he would not and could not settle until he found it. The energy and effort he put into seeking and searching for that prayer book became supernatural. And so it happened one night when the thief, a young novice, was asleep, he awoke in terror to see an apparition before him. The spirit was the grieved Anthony wailing for the loss of his precious possession. The novice realising the miraculous and divine nature of this incident quickly returned Anthony's property and confessed his crime.

That is one traditional story associated with why St. Anthony will help you find something lost. The other is connected with the saint's eloquent preaching. Through his gift of speaking about God and preaching the Faith many lost souls were won for the Kingdom of God. (I prefer the haunting apparition story!)



The current novel I'm reading is called '*Silence*' by the Japanese Catholic author Shusaku Endo. I'm only halfway through, but without giving too much of the plot away, it is set in 17<sup>th</sup> century Japan where Christianity has been outlawed. The narrator of the story is a Jesuit priest and missionary called Rodrigues. He has arrived on the shores of Japan and begins ministering, secretly, to the underground Catholic communities he finds.

Through Rodrigues we encounter the persecution and torture of Catholic's who will not renounce their faith. There is a gruesome episode where two devout villagers who have helped the Jesuit priest, suffer a prolonged and exhausting death. As Rodrigues witnesses their demise from a safe distance on the hillside, he begins to ask the question - Where is God? A natural question in the face of suffering and evil. Where is God? One of the victims begins to sing a hymn which concludes abruptly when he dies from sheer exhaustion. Then there is silence. Silence. All the priest hears from this moment on is the silence of God.

The chapter I've just finished however offers a glimmer of hope to the silence Rodrigues experiences. On a journey to find another underground Catholic community he crouches down to drink from a pool of water on the roadside.

***'The clouds disappeared from the water and instead there appeared the face of a man - yes, there reflected in the water was a tired, hollow face. I don't know why, but at that moment I thought of the face of yet another man. This was the face of a crucified man, a face which for so many centuries had given inspiration to artists.'***  
(extract from *Silence*, Shusaku Endo)

At a low moment in the priests life, at a time when he is doubting, when he seems to have lost Jesus and all he can hear is silence, the Lord uniquely makes his Presence felt. Not in a glorified and radiant state but in a muddy roadside puddle. The face that Rodrigues sees is not the noble image of a distant king but a close and present crucified Saviour. A Saviour who knows and has experienced the trials and tribulations of this life. This closeness of Jesus reminds me of Hebrews:

***'For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weakness with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace when we are in need of help.'*** (Hebrews 5:15-16)

Rodrigues, the persecuted suffering missionary, has not lost Jesus. In fact, he never lost Jesus. Jesus was always present but now in silence, when there is no distraction, he sees the Lord more clearly.

During this time of the global Coronavirus pandemic many things have changed and have been lost. The loss of lives, the loss of everyday routines, the loss of social gatherings and the loss of close and present human contact because of social distancing. But in this loss, something is found. I have seen the work of God the Holy Spirit each and every day from the news, phone calls and looking around me. God is not silent at this moment; God is not absent but has come closer as always in His unique and mysterious ways.

The Thursday 8pm public show of appreciation has not died out on Catlow Hall Street after these last two months; in fact, it's got louder. When I go to the Lychgate there is a really sense of togetherness and people let on to each other. There is no rushing but simply being present and appreciating the work of all key workers.



An appreciation of the blessing of family seems to have grown. The simple joy (though tiring and exhausting) of spending time with each other. Listening and discovering new things about each other. Bonds of unity becoming strengthened and love, real love, manifesting itself in thought, word and deed.

Parishioners are getting to know each other in different ways and meeting new members of the St. Mary's family. Those helping to do shopping, those ringing mobiles and landlines and face-timing all these relationships of faith are being cemented by the Holy Spirit.

As far as I can see the Lord is not lost, as he never went away. Through us his disciples, and with the grace of the Holy Spirit, he is present. As the suffering Jesuit priest saw in the roadside muddy puddle, the face of his compassionate Saviour, so we in our present trials can see the face of Jesus in our brothers and sisters.

### **First Single Bead: Our Father**

Let us ask the Father today for the care of those who are bewildered at this moment in time. Those stricken with grief with the loss of a loved one and those mourning the familiar lives they had before Covid-19.

### **Ten Beads: Hail Mary for each one**

Mary, beside herself at not being able to find Jesus her son, was given these comforting words at their reunion:

***“Why were you looking for me?” he replied, ‘Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father’s affairs?’ (Lk 2:49)***

The Lord reminds Mary that when she turns to God she will always find the Son. Let us ask the intercession of Our Lady to help us remember in times of doubt and uncertainty that Christ our Lord is always present and doing his loving Father's business for the salvation of the world.

### **Single Bead: Glory be**

In God the Holy Trinity we see the image of a loving family. Three Persons, One God. Father, Son and Holy Spirit united in their love. United in their work of mercy, reaching out to a fallen and corrupted world. Let us ask God to continue to help us in the ups and downs of our life.

When we pray the Fatima prayer let us love those brothers and sisters who have consciously chosen to walk away from the Lord and have freely decided to not live by his commandments and teachings.

### **Hail Holy Queen**

Since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century the '*Hail Holy Queen*' has been prayed by Catholics and it is the prayer that we normally recite to complete a rosary after meditating on a set of mysteries.

*Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears.*

*Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.*

Each day I go to the Chapel of Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, and before her statue I pray the *Hail Holy Queen*. My intention when I pray those words is always for you, the parishioners of St. Mary's. I have also discovered my gift for flower arranging! Each week I make sure she has flowers as a votive offering for all of us, the St. Mary's family.

### **Final Prayer**

Let us pray:

*O God, whose only begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal life. Grant, we beseech Thee, that by meditating on these mysteries of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they contain and obtain what they promise, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.*

God Bless you all, may the Angels watch over you and may Our Lady and the Saints always pray for you. Amen

I hope my inadequate reflections have in some small way helped you in prayer.

God Bless and keep praying.  
Fr. O'Brien