

SEEK & FIND



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INTRODUCTION

Responding to feedback from teachers, we are pleased to offer an exciting new textbook for Senior Cycle Non-Exam RE

- ▶ The first text of its kind to cover all eight sections of the NCCA Curriculum Framework.
- ▶ One book to cover 5th and 6th year.
- ▶ Each section is divided into lessons as opposed to chapters, making it very user-friendly.
- ▶ Each lesson has objectives and a summary to give a clear focus to the content covered.
- ▶ In each lesson, students are given opportunities to build their own responses to the material, thus ensuring they engage with the lesson on a personal level.
- ▶ Activities vary to challenge and encourage faith development in students by helping them to relate to God in their own lives, in the life of the Church and in the local community, as well as in the wider world.
- ▶ Activities provide for differentiated, active and co-operative learning by including a variety of methodologies and a wide range of different exercises.
- ▶ Developed and piloted by a team of experienced teachers.
- ▶ Additional resources will be available online at www.seekandfind.ie

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LESSON 10 THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY

Objectives: This lesson will introduce the origins of Philosophy and the key people involved in developing philosophical thought.

OPENING CONVERSATION

What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you think of the word 'philosophy'.

WHAT IS PHILOSOPHY?

Philosophy begins with human beings and our attempt to examine and understand the world around us. In a previous chapter we studied how archaeological sites have revealed evidence of the search for meaning undertaken by ancient civilisations such as in Newgrange and Mesopotamia. However this was merely the dawn of humanity's quest for meaning. Philosophy was brought to a higher level with Classical Greece. One Greek philosopher, Plato, famously argued that 'the unexamined life is not worth living'. He believed life to be pointless unless we spend time contemplating and studying it. So how exactly does one examine



life, what does the term 'philosophy' actually mean and where did philosophy begin?

The word 'philosophy' literally translates as a 'love of wisdom'. It refers to thinking about thinking; setting aside time in our lives to contemplate life at a deeper level. 'Theology' also comes from the Greeks, and means the study of the gods. When you, as a Senior Cycle student, ponder concepts such as what it is you want to do with your life and what the point is of doing your Leaving Certificate exams, you too become a philosopher. Through the act of questioning you join billions of human beings before you, who have also participated in philosophy.





PHILOSOPHY CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING MAIN AREAS OF STUDY:

Metaphysics: is the study of what reality is, for example the study of the relationship between the mind and the body.

Epistemology: is concerned with whether knowledge is possible and, if so, what the nature and scope of knowledge is.

Ethics: also known as ‘moral philosophy’ concerns the issue of what is the best way to live and whether this question can be answered.

Political Philosophy: concerns the government, and the relationship of individuals to communities including the state. It includes questions about justice, law, property, and the rights and obligations of the citizen.

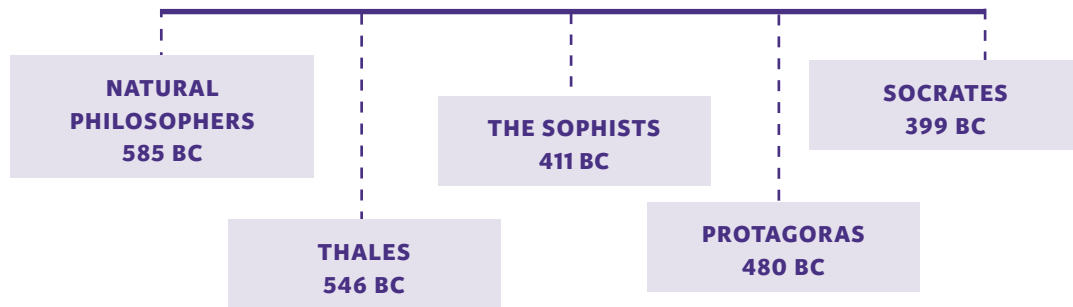
Aesthetics: looks at beauty, art, enjoyment, etc. and how beauty is created.

Logic: is the study of valid arguments and how they are formed.

THE ORIGINS OF PHILOSOPHY

Several cultures have contemplated philosophical questions and built traditions based on such questions. Philosophy is said to have had its origins in 6th-century BCE Greece. Whereas earlier societies used myth, Greek philosophy used reason. In fact, the Western way of thinking, political and legal structures, and education, are very much derived from the Greek invention of philosophy and politics. At the time the cities of Greece were thriving commercial centres. Greek society was flourishing artistically, politically and creatively. The Greeks were in the process of developing the basic structure of democracy (i.e. a society should not be ruled by a dictator but rather by politicians elected by the people).

They were also an adventurous sea-faring civilisation who explored extensively. Hence, the Greeks were quite a progressive people for the time. During their explorations they had learned geometry from the Egyptians and knowledge of the calendar from Asia Minor. Prior to this, humanity had a mythical understanding of the world. They used myths to understand what they could not explain. Philosophers, however, were dissatisfied with these mythical explanations and began to challenge them. As Athens was the cultural centre of Greece at the time, philosophy started from here and soon began to move in a new post-mythical direction.



Let's now take a brief look at the early development of Ancient Greek philosophy.

TIMELINE OF EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY

1. THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHERS

- ▶ The earliest known philosophers.
- ▶ Concerned with our true nature as human beings, how the universe began and our place within it.
- ▶ Believed that the universe was created from one of the natural elements of fire, air, water or earth.
- ▶ Were also known as pre-Socratic philosophers because they came before Socrates.
- ▶ One was a man by the name of Thales who believed everything originated from water.

2. THALES

- ▶ A natural philosopher.
- ▶ The first man to whom the name of 'wise' was given.
- ▶ A politician, geometer, astronomer and thinker.
- ▶ Credited with correctly predicting the solar eclipse of 585BCE.
- ▶ Disregarded the mythical legends of his ancestors.
- ▶ Focused instead on knowledge of the world and the stars.
- ▶ Laid the philosophical foundations for subsequent thinkers of the time such as the Sophists.
- ▶ Made it acceptable to question age-old traditions.

3. THE SOPHISTS

- ▶ Educated men.
- ▶ Travelled from place to place offering tuition on grammar and rhetoric (the art of debating, argument and applying logic).

- ▶ Also taught statesmanship and generalship.
- ▶ Charged for their services and were employed by the wealthy to provide their children with professional training.

4. PROTAGORAS

- ▶ Concerned with the person and their place in the world.
- ▶ Believed that it was impossible to know absolute truth as truth was a matter for each individual.
- ▶ Believed that the difference between good and evil cannot be fully known.
- ▶ Later philosophers disagreed with Protagoras including Socrates.

5. SOCRATES

- ▶ Concerned with the question of ethics (knowing the difference between right and wrong).
- ▶ Believed that it was not possible for any human to fully know truth.
- ▶ Wanted to establish a universal definition of justice.
- ▶ Worked to find laws and limits which society could abide by.
- ▶ Socrates' philosophy involved taking the role of an ignorant questioner – asking probing questions to show the experts how little they actually knew.
- ▶ Socratic wisdom is knowing that we do not know everything.
- ▶ Encouraged others to question their beliefs and knowledge also.
- ▶ Was critical of the Athenian government.
- ▶ Was executed in 399 BCE.

OVER TO YOU

1. What were the earliest philosophers known as?
2. What did the Natural Philosophers believe the universe was created from?
3. The natural philosophers were also known as Pre-Socratic. Why was this?
4. Thales was a Natural Philosopher and the first man to whom what name was given?
5. If you were to describe Thales' qualifications, what would you refer to him as?
6. Thales is credited with correctly predicting what event?
7. Thales made what acceptable for following philosophers?
8. Describe the function of the Sophists in early Greek culture.
9. Although widely known today for his mathematical achievements, why was Protagoras important to the philosophical world?
10. Socrates was concerned with which crucial philosophical concept?
11. How did Socrates play a crucial part in the development of our modern judicial system?
12. How and why did Socrates die?

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Now that you have studied the Early Greek Philosophers, which of them do you believe has had the greatest impact on modern culture? Take a class vote.

SUMMARY

- Philosophy originated in 6th-century BCE Greece. Greek culture was politically and creatively advanced for the time. This progressive environment helped to nourish philosophical development.
- The earliest philosophers were the Natural Philosophers who were concerned with the creation of the universe.
- One example of a natural philosopher was Thales who disregarded the myths of his ancestors and made it acceptable to question age-old traditions.
- The Sophists were educated men who travelled offering tuition on rhetoric, statesmanship and generalship.
- Protagoras believed that it was impossible to know absolute truth as truth was a matter for each person.
- Socrates wanted to establish a universal definition of justice.



LESSON 4

SON OF GOD AND SON OF MARY

Objectives: This lesson will explain the core and central belief of the Christian faith: the Incarnation, which we remember and celebrate during the season of Christmas, when God took on human nature in Jesus without giving up being God.

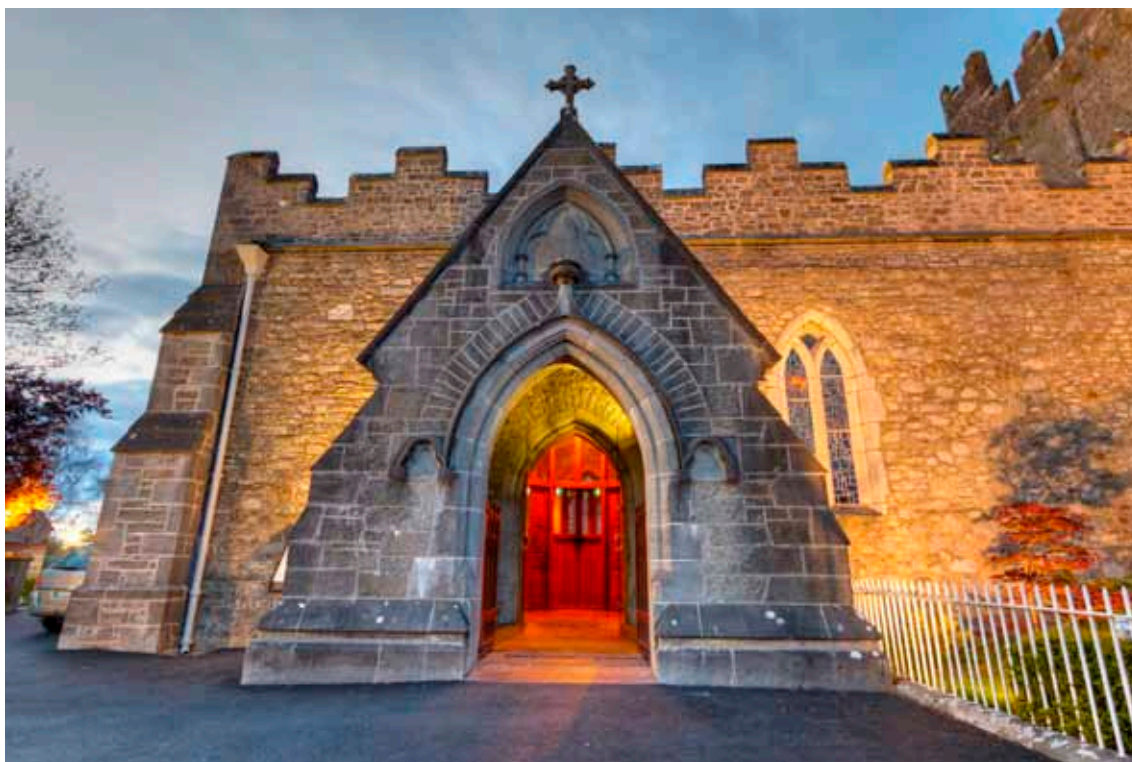
REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Parable of the Birds

Once there was a man who looked upon Christmas as a lot of humbug. He wasn't a Scrooge. He was a kind and decent person, generous to his family, upright in all his dealings with other people. But he didn't believe all that stuff about incarnation which churches proclaim at Christmas. And he was too honest to pretend that he did. 'I am truly sorry to distress you,' he told his wife, who was a faithful churchgoer. 'But I simply cannot understand this claim that God becomes human. It doesn't make any sense to me.'

On Christmas Eve his wife and children went to church for the midnight service. He declined to accompany them. 'I'd feel like a hypocrite,' he explained. 'I'd rather stay at home. But I'll wait up for you.'

Shortly after his family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched the flurries getting heavier and heavier. 'If we must have Christmas,' he thought, 'it's nice to have a white one.' He went back to his chair by the fireside and began to read his newspaper. A few minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. It was quickly followed by another, then another.



He thought that someone must be throwing snowballs at his living room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the storm. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his window. ‘I can’t let these poor creatures lie there and freeze,’ he thought. ‘But how can I help them?’ Then he remembered the barn where the children’s pony was stabled. It would provide a warm shelter.

He put on his coat and tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the door wide and turned on a light. But the birds didn’t come in. ‘Food will lure them in,’ he thought. So he hurried back to the house for breadcrumbs, which he sprinkled on the snow to make a trail into the barn. To his dismay, the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow. He tried shooing them

into the barn by walking around and waving his arms. They scattered in every direction – except into the warm, lighted barn.

‘They find me a strange and terrifying creature,’ he said to himself, ‘and I can’t seem to think of any way to let them know they can trust me. If only I could be a bird myself for a few minutes, perhaps I could lead them to safety ...’

Just at that moment the church bells began to ring. He stood silent for a while, listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. Then he sank to his knees in the snow. ‘Now I do understand,’ he whispered. ‘Now I see why You had to do it.’

- ▶ What do you think the man meant when he said, ‘Now I see why You had to do it’?
- ▶ What does this story add to your understanding of the Christmas story?



WHY DID GOD TAKE ON HUMAN NATURE?

The question ‘Why did God become man?’ has been asked since the earliest days of the Church. Our human understanding of the incarnation necessarily continues to grow, since we are dealing with ultimate mystery – something we could never have known on our own unless God revealed it to us. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), the great Cistercian spiritual writer

and Doctor of the Church, gives this insight: God became man in Jesus in order to know us ‘from the inside’ and thus be all the more likely to be merciful toward us.

OVER TO YOU

- ▶ What do you think of this explanation of the Incarnation?
- ▶ What might be your own explanation of it?

The word 'annunciation'
means 'announcement'.



THE ANNUNCIATION

The story of Jesus' life on earth began nine months before his birth, at his conception in Mary's womb. There would be no Christmas without Mary, a young Jewish woman who said 'Yes' to what must be the strangest and most challenging request in human history. The word 'annunciation' means 'announcement'. Luke 1:26-38 is the account of the annunciation – the announcement to Mary that God had chosen her to be mother of the Son of God, whom she was to name Jesus. You have read and listened to the telling of this story many times; and yet its meaning is inexhaustible and our coming to grasp its meaning is a lifelong task.

Read Luke's account of the annunciation again now, slowly, dwelling on every word, imaging the scene.

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary,

for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38)

THINK IT THROUGH

- ▶ Share any words or phrases that stood out for you. Why did they, and what do they mean?
- ▶ What do you imagine was going on in Mary's head and heart as she listened to the angel?
- ▶ How do you think you would have responded if you were Mary?

MARY'S YES

Mary's first reaction to the angel was to be 'much perplexed'. Her confusion as to why God had chosen her is very understandable. She was a virgin and engaged (betrothed) but not yet married to Joseph. We can only imagine the questions swirling around in Mary's head as the angel told her why God had chosen her. While her hope, and 'the hope of Israel' (Acts 28:20), for the Messiah was being fulfilled, Mary's faith must surely have been tested. Could God really have the power to create life within her?

Mary's words of response were a sign of her deep trust in God: 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word' (Luke 1:38). These were the words of a brave, strong and faith-filled woman who knew the implications of being pregnant before she was married. Some of her family, friends and others would question her fidelity to God's Law and hold her in disgrace. Yet Mary said 'Yes'.

JOURNAL

The Hail Mary is the most popular of all the prayers in honour of Mary. Write the following lines into your journal and explain what they mean to you in light of today's lesson.

Hail Mary,
full of grace,
the Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.

JOSEPH'S SIDE OF THE STORY

Now we will listen to the events of the annunciation through Joseph's ears and explore how he might have experienced these events. While Luke's account of the annunciation focuses on Mary, Matthew's account tells Joseph's side of the story. Read it slowly and carefully:

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do



Depiction of the Virgin Mary

this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins ...'. When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife. (Matthew 1:18-21, 24)

THINK IT THROUGH

- ▶ Share any words or phrases that stood out for you. Why did they stand out and what do they mean?
- ▶ What do you imagine was going on in Joseph's head and heart as he listened to the angel?
- ▶ From reading Matthew's account of the annunciation, what kind of person do you think Joseph was? Explain your answer.
- ▶ How do you think you would have responded if you were Joseph?

SUMMARY

- ♦ Without losing his divine nature, God assumed human nature.
- ♦ Jesus, the only Son of God and the only Son of the Virgin Mary, was fully divine and fully human, true God and true man.
- ♦ The story of Jesus' life on earth began with the annunciation.

LESSON 9 CHRIST IS RISEN!

Objectives: This lesson will help to deepen your understanding of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

OPENING CONVERSATION

The ultimate triumph of good over evil is an age-old storyline that artists, musicians, poets, novelists and playwrights have interpreted down through the ages in theatre, cinema, art and literature: ‘good’ battles ‘evil’, and just when all hope seems lost, good (usually) rises to triumph over evil once and for all. Such stories point to humanity’s belief in the existence and ultimate power of the good. This belief, which is embedded in the human heart, helps us find meaning in the hardships of life, and shows us how to see possibilities even in the most difficult situations.

Think of examples of films, literature, poetry, music or art that tell the story of good triumphing over evil. Share your favourite examples.

THE RESURRECTION – OUR HOPE

Without the resurrection, Jesus’ life would simply be an epic story of a good man overcome by evil, a tragic figure meeting a violent and unjust death on a cross, after a heroic life of loving and serving people. But Jesus was not simply a good and heroic man. He was goodness and love itself at work among us, whose love for and service of people was not defeated by his unjust execution. Jesus rose triumphantly and defeated death itself. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: ‘The resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly “I Am”, the Son of God and God himself’ (CCC, no. 653). Christ’s resurrection assures us of our own resurrection to new life after death.



THE EMPTY TOMB

After the death and burial of Jesus, Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb in which Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had buried Jesus. On finding the stone that was supposed to be blocking the entrance to the tomb rolled back and the tomb empty, Mary ran to Peter and John to share her astonishing discovery. Equally astonished, perhaps even bewildered, Peter and John rushed to the tomb to see for themselves.

Peter, John and the other disciples grappled with the reality of the empty tomb – and were unsure what to make of it. The fourth Gospel tells us that while they ‘believed ... they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead’ (John 20:8-9). Jesus did foretell his resurrection, but could it really be possible? Or did someone rob the grave and steal his body? The Risen Christ appeared to the disciples so they would not be in any doubt!



Mary Magdalene is the first disciple to whom the Risen Lord appears.

WITNESSES TO THE RESURRECTION

After the resurrection, the Risen Lord Jesus appeared many times to his disciples. As they continued to struggle with faith and doubt, they responded to their encounters with the Risen Christ in different ways: some fell down in worship (Matthew 28:9), some thought he might be a ghost (Luke 24:37), some did not recognise him right away (Luke 24:13-35; John 20:15-16), and some were outright resistant until they could touch him to make sure he was real (John 20:25). All these encounters with the Risen Lord gradually helped the disciples to cement their belief in the resurrection. Slowly they embraced and began to share the joyful news of Christ risen from the dead. It was in this sharing of faith that the early Church was rooted. Among those disciples who encountered the Risen Christ, Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Apostle stand out as two compelling examples. Let's look at how John the Evangelist describes their encounters.

MARY MAGDALENE

Mary Magdalene is the first disciple to whom the Risen Lord appears. In John 20:11-18 we read that Mary Magdalene stands weeping by the empty tomb because she thinks the body of Jesus has been stolen. The Risen Lord comes to

her, but she thinks he is the gardener and does not, at first, recognise him. Then he calls her by name, and hearing his voice, Mary Magdalene recognises the Risen Christ and immediately embraces her beloved Jesus. He tells Mary Magdalene not to hold on to him. Instead, she must let go of him again in order to go and share the good news of the resurrection with others.



Mary Magdalene by Bernardino Luini

THOMAS THE APOSTLE

On that same Easter Sunday evening, 'the first day of the week', the Risen Christ's first appearance to the disciples as a group takes place. However, Thomas the Apostle is absent. When the other disciples tell him the extraordinary good news, Thomas refuses to believe until he can touch and confirm the reality of the Risen Lord's body for himself. That same evening the Risen Lord returns to the disciples again and offers his body to Thomas to touch. Thomas exclaims in faith: 'My Lord and my God!' (John 20:28). The Risen Lord gently admonishes him, saying, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe' (John 20:29). In other words, our faith, the faith of all those who believe without seeing the Risen Christ face to face, is all the more 'blessed'.

Mary Magdalene and Thomas offer us two different perspectives and insights into the gift of faith; one focuses on the power of our emotions or feelings, and the other on our intellect or reason. Perhaps Mary was initially so overwhelmed by her emotions that she, at first, failed to recognise Jesus. Thomas, on the other hand, may have so rigidly adhered to the power of his intellect, looking for empirical evidence, that he too, at first, could not accept the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. By sharing these two stories back to back, John the Evangelist teaches that there are many paths to faith. Faith is an invitation, calling forth a free response to relationship with the Lord that demands our whole being, mind and heart. Both in grappling with doubt and in responding to God's call in faith, we bring our whole being, mind and heart into our relationship with God.

OVER TO YOU

With a partner, read and compare the encounters of the Risen Lord with Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) and Thomas (John 20:24-29). Share your thoughts on how each of these disciples of Jesus responded to him. Compare Christ's message to each of them.

REFLECT AND DISCUSS

Consider this image 'The Risen Lord', by the Chinese Christian artist He Qi. The figure of the Risen Lord in the centre embodies the shape of a cross. He is surrounded on four sides by smaller figures: the women and the apostles who went to the tomb are depicted at the bottom of the image, and the other disciples, some proclaiming faith in the resurrection and struggling with uncertainty and doubt, are shown at the top. In the forefront are bread on a paten and wine in a chalice, symbols of the Eucharist.



How does this depiction compare with your own image of the Risen Lord?

‘I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE’

Jesus not only predicted his coming death and resurrection but he also revealed the deeper meaning of those events. He declared, ‘I am the resurrection and the life’ (John 11:25). The paschal mystery, Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, is the heart and centre of the fulfilment of God’s saving promise of salvation and flourishing new life. The resurrection reveals the divine purpose of the incarnation and paschal mystery of the Son of God: all humanity is empowered to live in justice and holiness, in right relationship with God and with all creation. Christ defeated death and sin, and he opened

the way for all of humankind to live in peace and eternal life with God. The deepest desire of the human heart can truly be fulfilled.

Jesus’ resurrection does not mean that we will escape from the challenges and problems of life. What it does mean, however, is that we now have the God-given power, the grace, not to be defeated by them. On our behalf, Christ defeated death and all of death’s power – which is present in many events and experiences of life on earth – such as despair, dead ends, the loss of creativity, the loss of opportunity, the loss of imagination, the consequences of sin, and feelings of alienation from self, others and God.



JOURNAL

How could belief in the resurrection make a difference in your life?
How could it affect how you see the world?

THE ASCENSION

The ascension marks the end of the forty days the Risen Christ spent among his disciples. The Gospel reveals that after those forty days, Christ was taken up into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father. The Acts of the Apostles describes the scene in more detail.

So when they had come together, they asked him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.’ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing

up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven’ (Acts 1:6-11).

OVER TO YOU

Imagine yourself standing among Jesus’ disciples, gazing upward as he disappears. What might be going through your mind?

SUMMARY

- ▶ Christ’s resurrection assures us of our own resurrection to new life after death.
- ▶ Among those disciples who encountered the Risen Christ, Mary Magdalene and Thomas the Apostle stand out as two compelling examples.
- ▶ The paschal mystery, Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, is the heart and centre of the fulfilment of God’s saving promise of salvation.

VERITAS

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