

THE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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We, the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea are alive in Christ witnessing the love of God in the world

MISSION

Called by the Father, sent by Jesus
and moved by the Holy Spirit,
we strive to promote God's Kingdom
by witnessing the Good News,
by fostering growth in holiness for all
and by encouraging fuller participation
in Church and society,
so as to transform the world
through the love of Christ.

12.4	COMMITMENT TO LIFE (To to	ransform the world through the love of Christ)
12.3	DEATH TO LIFE	(Fostering growth in holiness)
12.2	JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CRE	EATION (Encouraging fuller participation in Church and society)
12.1	MORAL DECISION MAKING	(Witnessing the Good News)
11.4	CHRISTIAN FAMILY LIFE	(Witnessing the love of God in the world 2.)
11.3	DISCIPLESHIP	(Witnessing the love of God in the world 1.)
11.2	CHURCH, ALIVE IN CHRIST	(Alive in Christ)
11.1	JOINING THE CHRISTIAN JOURNEY	(We are Church)

Nihil Obstat

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Fr Paul Jennings MSC Writer and editor

Sr Mary McCarthy PBVM

NCEC

INTRODUCTION

The Topics for this Grade 11 and 12 Catholic Religious Education curriculum have been developed from the Vision and Mission Statement of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea. The curriculum is also built around several key Christian living skills, which can be found on Page 6 of the Teacher's Guide for Unit 12.1 and in the Syllabus, Page 4.

These third and fourth Units of Grade 12 are based on the words of the Mission Statement: "fostering growth in holiness" and "to transform the world through the love of Christ". The two sets of words are closely related because it is by becoming holy that we do transform the world through the love of Christ.

There are four parts to these Units:

12.3

PART A: An exploration of different descriptions of "holiness" and what fosters holiness.

PART B: Reflection on their personal growth in holiness by journaling, and by becoming more aware of their own desires for deeper relationships of faith, hope and love.

PART C: A study of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus through concluding their study of the Gospel of St John.

12.4

PART D: Celebration of their commitment to "transform their world through the love of Christ".

Part A will help your students have clear ideas about holiness. Parts B and C will give them experiences that may help them grow in holiness. Part C will help them celebrate their lives.

Holiness is a complex reality. It is like a precious stone that has many different sides and looks different from different angles or points of view. One important aspect of holiness is "wholeness" or integration. This is why, in this Unit, you will have the opportunity to help your students integrate many of the Christian living skills they have learnt in previous Units.

The ability to look at realities from different points of view is one of the skills of mind and heart that develops tolerance. Not the fundamentalist tolerance of "laik bilong wanwan"; not the Facebook choice of "like" or "don't like", but an educated tolerance that understands why people can have different points of view, and so can respect differences. Such educated tolerance is another aspect of holiness.

Another aspect of holiness is the ability to live a balanced life. One way of exploring this aspect of holiness is by looking again at the map of the heart and understanding that finding balance in each of the basic desires of our hearts - balance between desires that are too strong or too weak - is one way of growing in holiness

For Christians holiness is a gift. It is not some quality we achieve by ourselves. In another context, St Paul wrote in his letter to the Romans:

They don't know that it is God who makes us just and holy and, while they try to build their own perfection, they cannot accept the way God will give it to them. (Rom. 10:3)

These words from St. Paul point to what might be the biggest block many students may have about growing in holiness. Our secular culture believes that we can do everything by ourselves; young people often live under a compulsion to be self sufficient. But Jesus said:

I am the vine, you are the branches. As long as you remain in me and I in you, you bear much fruit; but apart from me you can do nothing. (Jn. 15: 5) Unit 12.4

COMMITMENT TO LIFE (To transform the world through the love of Christ)

UNIT FOCUS

Students learn

 To develop their own description of wholeness and holiness by integrating their experiences of what fosters holiness.

- To explore how to lead a balanced life by balancing their basic desires.
- More about the Gospel of St. John.
- To celebrate their commitment to life.

KEY CONCEPTS: GOD (FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT)

SCRIPTURE JESUS CHURCH

PRAYER CHRISTIAN LIVING SOCIAL JUSTICE

In this Unit: God Jesus Scripture Christian living Prayer

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

Students can

- Describe holiness and identify means of fostering holiness.
- 2. Summarise the Christian living skills that help live a balanced life.
- Apply St. John's description of the death and resurrection of Jesus to their own growth in holiness.

SKILLS

Students can

- Continue to develop their skills of quiet prayer.
- 2. Journal, to reflect on their experience of spiritual growth.
- Work to balance their desire to grow in faith, hope and love.
- Analyse and synthesise ideas about holiness and apply these ideas to their own lives.

ATTITUDES

Students can:

Commit themselves to their own spiritual growth and the growth of their communities.

Scripture references

Jn. Chapters 18-21 Ephesians Ch. 3 1Peter Ch. 1 and 2., Philippians 2: 7 - 8,

Jn. 8: 27 - 28, 11: 24 - 25, 17: 25 - 26.

References to the Catholic Catechism

CCC: 1 - 3, 144, 153 - 154, 717 - 741, 823 - 829, 1077 - 1080, 1987 - 2016,

2558 - 2565, 2598 - 2615,

CCPNG: 282, 284, 316, 330 - 335, 408 - 455,

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

 Invite your students to research, on the internet or in books or by asking people, and write two short paragraphs: A description of holiness and three activities that foster growth in holiness.

(This initial activity will allow you, the teacher, to identify students who already have a good idea about what holiness is. These students could skip Part A and spend more time on Part C and D. It will also allow you to identify students who are not very interested in holiness. They could be encouraged to spend more time on Part B where they might discover the sources of their resistance.)

Descriptions of holiness:

An old tale is told about a group of blind men who touch an elephant to learn what it is like. One man touches the leg and concludes, "Elephants are like trees." "Oh no," says the man touching the ear. "Elephants are like fans." "You're both wrong," says the man touching the tail. "Elephants are like snakes."

What is true of elephants might also be true of holiness. God is holy, but what is holiness? It's like we have a bit of an idea and from this bit we have formed a composite picture. "It's like this," says the theologian. "No, it's like that," says the Bible school student. We're like blind men feeling our way around something that is far bigger than we can imagine.

We are called to "be holy as the Lord your God is holy" (Lev. 19: 2; 1Peter 1:15—16). But how can we be holy if we do not know what holiness means?

Here are ten descriptions of holiness, from different points of view.

1: Holiness is sin avoidance

There are Scripture quotes that exhort us to "wash and make yourselves clean" (Isa 1:16). Jesus plans to present us to Himself "holy and unblemished" (Eph 5:27). But the problem with this idea about holiness is we define a thing (holiness) in terms of something that is not the thing (sin). It's like defining light as the absence of darkness. It's technically true but it's not a good description. It doesn't actually tell us what holiness is. Neither does it describe a God who was holy long before there was any sin to avoid.

2: Holiness is being set apart from something

There are Scripture quotes that tell us holiness is being set apart:

"It was fitting that our High Priest be holy, undefiled, set apart from sinners and exalted above the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).

However, Jesus was also the friend of sinners; he spent time with them and ate with them. Jesus didn't pray that his followers would be taken out of the world, but would be sanctified (made holy) in it. (Jn. 17: 15—18)

3: Holiness is being set apart for God

This definition is useful as an adjective for describing holy things like temples (Ps 11:4) and mountains (Ex 19:23). But how does this definition describe a holy God? Is God dedicated to Himself? Is God set apart for Himself?

4: Holiness is moral perfection

Leviticus Chapter 18 describes holiness as moral perfection. This description of holiness is popular on websites that preach holiness and is usually accompanied by practical "7 steps" or "12 steps" to holiness. However, people soon learn that they cannot be morally perfect:

"If we say 'we have no sin', we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." (1Jn. 1:8)

Holiness is righteousness

Jesus is known as the Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:14), but these two words do not mean the same thing. There is some overlap but there's also a difference. God is holy AND God is righteous. They are not identical.

6: Holiness is godliness

"You ought to live holy and godly lives: (2Peter 3: 11)

Again, there is some relationship between holiness and godliness, but the two realities are also different because the Bible often describes God as holy. We don't say God is godly.

7: Holiness means worthy of devotion and worship

This is one of the Dictionary definitions. It does apply to God who is worthy of our devotion and worship. But angels are also holy (Mk. 8:38) and we do not worship them. And people are holy, but we do not give people devotion and worship.

Holiness is wholeness.

To say that "God is holy" refer to the wholeness, fullness, beauty, and abundant life that overflows within the Godhead. God lacks nothing. He is unbroken, undamaged, un-fallen, complete and entire within Himself. He is the indivisible One, wholly self-sufficient, and the picture of perfection. Holiness is the harmony of all the virtues.

A holy and whole God stands in contrast to an unholy and broken world. Because of sin and separation we live in a world of death and scarcity. In our natural state we are consumed with our needs and lack. We spend our lives trying to get what we don't have and trying to repair the damage of our estrangement. But the only cure for our brokenness is a revelation of a whole and holy God who lacks nothing and who has promised to journey with us towards the fullness of life.

Holiness (wholeness) is allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us.

The Holy Spirit, whom Christ the head pours out on his members, builds, moves and makes holy all those who are "in Christ". She is the sacrament of the Holy Trinity's communion with people. (CCC 747)

"God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us"
(Rom. 5:5)

Holiness (wholeness) is our sharing in the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

"You have been chosen by the provident purpose of God the Father, to be made holy by the Spirit, obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood."

(1Peter 1: 1-2)

To know God, to experience a good relationship with God, to strive to be united with God - these have been fundamental desires of all good people since the beginning of human history. (CCPNG 172)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

 Ask your students to read each of the descriptions of holiness on the previous pages and use the format below to decide from what point of view each description is made.

(See Unit 12.1, pages 28 and 29 for an explanation of different horizons or points of view.)

Description of Holiness	Law & Culture	Inner conviction	Personal development	Compassionate love	Social transformation
Holiness is sin avoidance			Construction	ve Tou usy boo illa	enwey yl ressaci
Holiness is being set apart from some- thing	San tastide san	WO.I TERROR		en en term ke	ept mount to
Holiness is being set apart for God	and lo				D proposes a
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Holiness is righteousness	oute a face y	Sécul des son a	elega, sett (s18)	ed or bed to see	be of
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Holiness means wholeness	Sur Half Litheral of		a treatment days of	THE OWN HALL STREET	County and Dar-
Holiness is allowing the Holy Spirit to work in us	MIL TO PARKET TO SE	annelius servina		no visis um te to	
Holiness is our shar- ing in the commun- ion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit	+-				

What some saints have said about holiness.

"Holiness is a disposition of the heart that makes us humble and little in the arms of God, aware of our weakness, and confident -- in the most audacious way -- in His Fatherly goodness."

--St. Therese of the Infant Jesus

"We must have a real living determination to reach holiness. I will be a sain't means I will despoil myself of all that is not God; I will strip my heart of all created things; I will live in poverty and detachment; I will renounce my will, my inclinations, my whims and fancies, and make myself a willing slave to the will of God."

--Blessed Mother Teresa

Sanctify yourself and you will sanctify society.

-- Saint Francis of Assisi

Holiness is believing in God's personal love for me, as taught and shown by Jesus, accepting His love and co-operating with His loving Spirit to share His love with my neighbours.

THREE KINDS OF PERFECT LOVE

St. Thomas Aquinas asked the question: "Is it possible in this life to have perfect love of God?"

In answering this question, he distinguishes three kinds of perfect love of God:

- The infinite love of the Divine Persons: This is proper to God alone. He alone can love Himself
 to the full extent that He is lovable. No creature is capable of infinite love.
- 2. The perfect love of the Blessed in Heaven, who always love God to the full extent of their capacity. Their mind and heart are always actually and completely occupied with God. We, in this life, are not capable of that love, for we have our ups and downs as to the intensity and extent of our love of God.
- 3. Perfect love of God in this life: This requires not only avoiding what is contrary to charity, i.e. grave sin, but as St. Thomas expresses it, a striving "to remove whatever hinders the mind's affections from tending wholly to God;" i.e. whatever interferes with one's total surrender to God. This implies a striving to avoid even minor deliberate failures against the love of God and neighbour. Yet, it does not exclude sins of human frailty. No one in this life, without a special privilege from God (as the Blessed Virgin Mary enjoyed), can avoid all sins of human frailty. So their presence should not be a source of discouragement, if one is striving to avoid them. St. Thomas says:

"Those who are perfect in this life are said to offend in many things with regard to venial sins, which result from the weakness of the present life (i.e. from human frailty); and in this respect they are imperfect in comparison with the perfection of heaven." (Aquinas: On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life)

But this presupposes that we are faithful in cultivating the garden of the heart...that we WATER it with frequent prayer...that we FERTILIZE it with fervent reception of the sacraments....that we WEED it by mortification and self-denial...that we expose it to the WARM SUNSHINE of works of mercy and the faithful fulfilment of our daily duties.

What fosters growth in holiness?

St Peter's description: (1 Peter 1: 15, 22—2: 3, 9—10)

Imitate the One who called you. As he is holy, so, you too be holy in all your conduct, since Scripture says: Be holy for I am holy.

In obeying the truth you have gained interior purification from which comes sincere love for our brothers and sisters. Love one another, then, with all your heart, since you are born again, not from mortal beings, but with enduring life, through the Word of God who lives and remains forever. It is written; All flesh is grass and its glory like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord endures forever. This word is the Gospel which has been brought to you.

So give up all evil and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and all kinds of gossip. Like new born children, seek eagerly the unspoilt milk of the Word which will help you grow and reach salvation.

You are a chosen race, a community of priest-kings, a consecrated nation, a people God has made his own to proclaim his wonders. For he called you out of darkness to his own wonderful light. At one time you were no people but now you are God's people, you had not received his mercy but now you have been given mercy.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

- Invite your students to analyse and then synthesise the above writing of St Peter by choosing the first or foundation step in growth in holiness and then the other steps that flow from this.
 - One example of such analysis and synthesis is given below.

(There is not one right way to analyse and synthesise this Scripture quotation. How your students will do so will depend on where they are on their journey of life and the depth of their experience of God and his ways. However growth in holiness starts (foundation step) with what God does for us; it does not start with anything we do or can do.)

Foundation step: Experience and awareness of being born again, called by God to be his chosen people

Next steps:

- Form a relationship with the Word of God, both as person and as Scripture.
- Obey the truth learnt from Jesus the Word and the Gospel. Imitate your Father,
- Develop sincere, whole hearted love for one another.
- Experience purification of heart and mind.
- Proclaim his wonders.

What fosters growth in holiness?

2. St Paul's description: (Letter to the Ephesians. Ch. 3)

And now I kneel in the presence of the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth has received its name.

May he strengthen you in your inner self, through his Spirit, according to the riches of his glory.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith.

May you be rooted and founded in love,

May you be able to understand, with all the believers, the width, the length, the height and the depth—in a word -May you know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge.

May you be filled with the utter fullness of God.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

Invite your students to learn and sing the song based on this Scripture.

The Fullness of God

Deep in Christ, I pray you know, the power he can give.

May your hidden self grow strong, and may you live,
strong in faith and built on love, until you know
how high and long, how wide and deep, the fullness of God.

May the God of Jesus Christ, the Father we serve, fill your minds that you may see, deep in your heart, what hope his call now holds for you; his promise true to fill your heart with power to live the fullness of God.

Know the way you learnt from Christ, to live life anew. Let your heart be drawn to him; let Christ renew the hope in you to grow into goodness and truth; and living so, you'll come to know, the fullness of God

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

 Now ask your students to write their own description of holiness and what fosters growth in holiness. Invite them to share their description with others.

What fosters growth in holiness?

3. Christian living skills:

The Christian Living skills that are the main outcomes of the Grade 11 and 12 Syllabus are all aimed at fostering growth in holiness. This chart may help your students reflect on how each Christian living skill helps them grow in holiness and give them an opportunity to reflect on how well they have mastered each skill. They can give themselves a mark out of 10 in the third column to assess their mastery of each skill.

CHRISTIAN LIVING SKILL	HOW DOES THIS SKILL FOSTER GROWTH IN HOLINESS?	MASTERY
Shared Christian Reflection on Life.	d of government and service of the service of the government of	MARKET BY
How to explore the basic desires of my heart.		= =2 1 / 2/11
How to balance desires that are too weak or too strong.		digressori
How to journal.		
How to pray from the heart.	of every control of the state o	
How to meet Jesus in prayer.		was jurge.
How to let go, forgive and be reconciled.	Participal Control of the Control of	n e lead
How to become more alive in Christ.		
How to grow as Christian leaders.		
How to apply Christian Leader- ship skills.	to first to the out of all the second self the second	
How to make Christian moral decisions.	decircle of with the common of	
How to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.	Control of the second s	100

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

- Ask your students to complete the table above; they might like to work in small groups to reflect on how each Christian living skill fosters growth in holiness
- Invite your students to spend some time in quiet reflection on their own experience of growth in holiness and then journal about their reflection.

PART B. MY DESIRE FOR HOLINESS

The map of the heart can help your students become more aware of their desire for holiness and the destructive tendencies which may block their growth in holiness.

Your students will experience a desire for holiness in different ways. They may experience a strong desire for respect, for justice, for co-operation with others. They may experience a strong desire for genuine intimacy, for the ability to be happy and enjoy life, for peace and quiet. These are all different dimensions of a desire for holiness.

They may experience a desire to love and be loved that will satisfy their hearts; this desire may be experienced as wanting to be someone, wanting to be secure, wanting to be in deeper relationships with Jesus and with others.

They may experience deep hopes about their lives and our world.

They may experience a desire to be better people; to live a more balanced life; to become more whole.

They may just experience a deep longing in their hearts that they cannot name.

They may experience a desire for deeper communion with their Father God, in Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

All of these desires are part of us, created by God. They are one way we are "called by the Father, sent by Jesus and moved by the Holy Spirit" to journey through life and come to the fullness of life in him.

We often cannot see our own selves clearly. We need other people, especially a trusted companion, to reflect our strengths and our challenges.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Ask your students to use the map of the heart on the next page and share with their companion their reflections about these questions:

- How do I most experience a desire to be better, to be whole, to live a balanced life?
- 3. The biggest challenge I see for myself in living a balanced life is to balance my desire for
- 4. The biggest challenge I see in you to live a balanced life is balancing your desire for
- Journal about what you have discovered about yourself and what you have been told by your companion.
- You might also ask your students to listen to the words of a suitable song and share their reflections or journal about what the song says to them.

The words of three such songs are on page 14.

OUR BASIC DESIRES CAN BE BALANCED IN THE MIDDLE OR THEY CAN BE TOO STRONG OR TOO WEAK AND BECOME DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES IN OUR LIVES

Laziness. Always working. Busy...to Desire for quiet Slow to help others avoid relationships with For reflection No energy to wait for God God and others. Fill life Contemplation Put things off 'til later. with noise, music, idle talk, To experience God SLOTH Expect nothing. S MORE MORE MORE Need immediate gratification. All pleasure is wrong No thought of hurt to others. Enjoy suffering Desire to enjoy life Impatient. Excessive desires Don't ask for anything. To have a share in for food, drink, drugs, others GLUTTONY the good things of life possessions. Martyr ME ME ME NO NO NO Our relationship is for me; to Denial of need for Intimacy. satisfy my needs. No bound-Fear of developing warm and caring relationships. aries. Control. Abuse of pow-Desire for intimacy Authoritarian, Bullying, To be close to another er. Sexual and emotional Isolated to give and receive love manipulation of others for WE = ME + you WE = YOU + me ME: too good, in charge, me: too small, no use, nothing to contribute. powerful. Desire to be with others; you: useless, no help. You: too big, overpowering. to collaborate, co-operate, to If you do something good, I be-I become powerless, compli-ant, then resentful. ENVY come resentful, ungrateful; self sufficient, JEALOUSY live in community. Blame others for hurts and Don't care. wrongs. Desire for payback, Desire for justice No energy to fix things to destroy. for others to be treated or mend relationships. Violent destructive anger. with respect and human Apathy. dignity. For life to be fair. RESENTMENT Cannot value self self importance neglect own needs worship self "I'm no good" Desire for respect "I'm better than anyone" easily controlled by for human dignity others. try to control others for survival Low self esteem PRIDE for self worth A basic desire too A basic desire too weak leads to these strong leads to these BASIC DESIRES destructive tendencies destructive tendencies. Desire to grow Desire to know Desire to be is why we are optito be someone, is why we ask mistic; why we questions, seek expect good things to be secure. answers, wonder. to happen. to be who I am: research, study. to be really human Hope is the gift that strengthens my to be authentic. Faith is the gift that inspires us to keep desire to grow. searching for truth. Love is the gift that makes me who I

13

The Impossible Dream

To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go.

To right the un-rightable wrong
To love pure and chaste from afar
To try when your arms are too weary
To reach the unreachable star.

This is my quest
To follow that star
No matter how hopeless
No matter how far
To fight for the right
Without question or pause
To be willing to march into Hell
For a heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true
To this glorious quest
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm
When I'm laid to my rest.

And the world will be better for this
That one man, scorned and covered with scars
Still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable star.

You raise me up

When I am down and, oh my soul, so weary; When troubles come and my heart burdened be; Then, I am still and wait here in the silence, Until you come and sit awhile with me.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains; You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas; I am strong, when I am on your shoulders; You raise me up... To more than I can be,

There is no life - no life without its hunger; Each restless heart beats so imperfectly; But when you come and I am filled with wonder, Sometimes, I think I glimpse eternity.

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains; You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas; I am strong, when I am on your shoulders; You raise me up... To more than I can be.

You raise me up... To more than I can be.

How can I keep from singing

My life goes on in endless song above earth's lamentations, I hear the real, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.

Through all the tumult and the strife.

I hear it's music ringing,

It sounds an echo in my soul.

How can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness 'round me close,
songs in the night it giveth,

No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I'm clinging. Since love is lord of heaven and earth how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble in their fear and hear their death knell ringing, when friends rejoice both far and near how can I keep from singing?

In prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging, when friends by shame are undefiled how can I keep from singing?

PART C: THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The pictures St. John paints of Jesus' death and resurrection are quite different to the other Gospels. In John's Gospel, Jesus is clearly in charge from the moment he is arrested. There is no agony in the garden. When the soldiers and police come to arrest Jesus, they fall to the ground when he speaks. He teaches Pilate about his identity and mission and it is he who puts Pilate on trial. He brings together his mother and the beloved disciple. He is not killed but decides the moment of his death when he give up his Spirit.

John also shows in many details how Jesus' crucifixion, death and resurrection fulfils Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. This is his way of saying that there is a providence at work despite the injustice and wrong doing of the human actors.

John wants to show us that these events are the central "hour" in the history of the world. He wants us to focus, not so much on the tragedy of Jesus death, but on God's power at work in Jesus.

If we read and reflect on John's "Good News", we may learn these same things:

- That, united with Jesus, we can find new life through the smaller deaths that are part of our experience. We can do this by imitating Jesus' courage and strength of heart in the face of hurtful and disappointing experiences. We can do this by becoming more aware of how God's power is at work in the face of human sin and weakness.
- That we can try and integrate the Word that Jesus speaks and is with our own "Old Testament" the noble traditions and customs that are part of our Papua New Guinea cultures.
- That we also experience God's power at work in our own weakness and suffering, in the injustices
 we suffer, and so experience resurrection.

John is showing us how Jesus "transformed the world through his love".

After the introductory activity on Page 16, there are only two activities recommended in this part of the Unit.

Quiet prayer and

Journaling to apply the experience to their own lives.

These two activities will their own inner journey in ney from death to life. with Jesus, they may experihealing power in their own This is growth in holiness.



encourage your students to focus on relationship with Jesus in his jour-As they walk the way of the Cross ence his presence, compassion and way of the Cross.

Why did Jesus have to suffer and die?

In the Gospels and the Letters of the New Testament and in Christian theology, there have been many different reasons given by different thinkers and writers to this question. That there are different interpretations should not be a surprise. For Christians, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the central action in all human history. It is complex and so can be described and interpreted in different ways. People have always tried to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus from within their own cultural beliefs and values and dominant philosophies or ways of thinking about their world. People have always been limited by their horizon or viewpoint in understanding what St. Paul called the scandal of the cross.

C S Lewis has written:

The interpretation most people have heard is the one about our being let off because Christ volunteered to bear a punishment instead of us. Now on the face of it that is a very silly theory. If God was prepared to let us off, why on earth did He not do so? And what possible point could there be in punishing an innocent person instead? None at all that I can see, if you are thinking of punishment in the police-court sense.

On the other hand, if you think of a debt, there is plenty of point in a person who has some assets paying it on behalf of someone who has not. Or if you take "paying the penalty," not in the sense of being punished, but in the more general sense of "paying the bill," then, of course, it is a matter of common experience that, when one person has got himself into a hole, the trouble of getting him out usually falls on a kind friend.

(Mere Christianity)

In Crossing the Threshold of Hope, Pope Benedict XVI wrote:

The scandal of the Cross remains the key to the interpretation of the great mystery of suffering, which is so much a part of the history of mankind.

"He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." (Phil 2:7-8)

Everything is contained in this statement,

Is the question: why did Jesus have to suffer and die? or Why did Jesus decide to suffer and die?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Ask your students to use the internet or other sources to discover different interpretations about why Jesus had to die or why Jesus decided to suffer and die.
- Include in their research the relevant sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Catechism of the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea.

St. John's understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus can be found in several places in his Gospel:

When you have lifted up the Son of Man then you will know that I am He and that I do nothing of myself but speak just as the Father taught me. (Jn. 8: 27–28)

Then Jesus said: "the Hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.

Whoever loves their life destroys it; whoever despises their life in this world keeps it for everlasting life.

(Jn. 11: 24 - 25)

Righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I know you, and these have known that you have sent me. As I revealed your Name to them, so will I continue to reveal it, so that the love with which you love me may be in them and I also may be in them. (Jn. 17: 25 - 26)

By his wounds we are healed. (Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

St. John has written the story of Jesus suffering and death in six scenes.

For each of these scenes in the following six pages, invite your students to:

- Sit with Jesus in quiet prayer and listen to what he says.
- Reflect on how this scene could be applied to their own journey.
- Journal about their reflections.
- Share their reflections with their companion.

Some students might want to meditate and journal about each of the scenes in the next six pages. Other students might want to take more time and meditate more deeply on one or two scenes, which speak to them more about their present situation and their spiritual journey.

Jesus allows himself to be arrested

When Jesus had finished speaking, he went with his disciples to the other side of the Kidron valley; a garden was there which Jesus and his disciples entered.

Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place since Jesus often met there with his disciples. He led soldiers of the Roman battalion and guards from the chief priests and Pharisees, who went there with lanterns, torches and weapons.

Jesus knew all this was going to happen to him. He stepped forward and asked: "Who are you looking for?" They answered: "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus said: "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, stood there with them.

When Jesus said 'I am he', they moved back and fell to the ground. He then asked them a second time: "who are you looking for?" and they answered, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus replied, "I have told you that I am he, If you are looking for me, let these others go." Thus what Jesus said came true: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."

Simon Peter had a sword; he drew it and struck Malchus, the High Priests servant, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus said to Peter: "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given to me?"

So the guards and the soldiers, with their commander, seized Jesus and bound him: they took him first to Annas. Annas was the father-in -law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year: and it was Caiaphas who had told the Jews: "it is better that one man should die for the people."

Jn. 18: 1—14

Commentary on the text

John sets the scene - at night, in a garden - and the main characters for what is to follow: Jesus, his disciples, Judas, the soldiers (representing the civil authority) and the guards (representing the religious authority). Both Roman and Jewish authorities were responsible for Jesus' death.

Jesus makes the first move. He is in charge of what will happen. Jesus' question: Who are you looking for? Is almost the same question he asked the first disciples (Jn. 1: 38). It is a question meant for all of us.

Jesus enemies fall to the ground at the powerful name of "I AM".

Jesus commands that they let his disciples go free. He is the Good Shepherd, protecting his sheep. (Jn. 10:28) This scene would have been a source of peace for Christians at that time who were also being arrested and killed for their beliefs.

Jesus rejects Peter's attempt to defend him with violence. Jesus knows that meeting violence with more violence is not his Father's way of solving conflicts. He trusts his Father to lead him on the journey he has to go.

Annas was the High Priest from 6 AD until 15 AD. He remained a power behind the Sanhedrin.

John is showing us the truth of his words: He came to his own, yet his own people did not receive him. (Jn. 1:11)

References to the Old Testament;

The Kidron Valley: King David made this same journey when he was betrayed (2Sam. 15: 14, 23). Jesus is following the footsteps of another king.

A garden: In the first garden the first man encountered evil and was defeated by the evil one.

(Rom. 5: 15-19)

I am he: Jesus uses the powerful name of YAHWEH, as revealed to Moses. (Ex. 3: 14-15)

They fell to the ground: Psalm 27:2

Simon Peter

Simon Peter, with another disciple, followed Jesus. Because this other disciple was known to the High Priest, they let him enter the court-yard of the High Priest along with Jesus, but Peter had to stay outside at the door. The other disciple went out and spoke to the maid-servant at the gate and brought Peter in. Then this servant on duty at the door said to Peter: "So you also are one of his disciples." But Peter answered: "I am not."

Now the servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire and were standing and warming themselves because it was cold, and Peter also was with them, warming himself.

The High Priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him: "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in places where the Jews meet together, either at the assemblies in synagogues or in the Temple. I did not teach secretly. Why, then, do you ask me? Ask those who heard me, they know what I said."

At this reply, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a blow on the face, saying: "Is that the way to answer the High Priest?" Jesus said to him: "If I have spoken wrongly, point it out; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"

Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas, the High Priest.

Now Simon Peter stood there warming himself. They said to him: "Surely you also are one of his disciples." He denied it and answered, "I am not." But one of the High Priests servants, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked: "Did I not see you with him in the garden?" Again Peter denied it, and at once the cock crew.

Jn. 18: 15-27

Commentary on the text

John sets these two scenes together to show the contrast between them. Jesus speaks the truth, even though he knows the consequences; Peter tells lies to save himself. Jesus says: I am. Peter says: I am not. Jesus says: Ask those who heard me at the same time as Peter, who could defend him, is saying that he does not know him.

Peter and the other disciples did not lack courage. But when Jesus was arrested they became confused; they expected Jesus to use his divine power to resist and overcome his enemies. When God did not act the way they expected him to do, they could lose faith or they could grow into a deeper appreciation of who God is and how he works in our world.

The "other disciple's" silence may be a sign that he was quiet and reflective, trying to understand and accept what God was doing in this tragedy.

John does not tell us how Peter's denial of Jesus was resolved until Chapter 21 of his Gospel.

Jesus appeared before two courts. First before the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Council of the Jews and later before the Roman Governor. He was accused of two illegal activities (about his disciples and his teaching). The accusation about his disciples was to try and prove he was a political agitator. The accusation about his teaching was that he claimed to be the Son of God. Throughout his trials the Religious authorities mix these two accusations to try and gain the outcome they want. They did not have the authority to have anyone put to death, which was the penalty for anyone who claimed to be equal to God. They finally had to bring the charge that Jesus claimed to be a king. This was the only charge that could bring a sentence of death from the Roman Governor.

References to the Old Testament

The relationships between a loving God, suffering and sin are a major theme throughout the Old Testament writings. The Book of Job was written to look critically at the belief that God rewards the good with riches and wealth and punishes the sinner with suffering. However this belief was still very strong in Jesus' time. From the cross, Jesus teaches that God does not punish the sinner; God forgives the repentant sinner.

Jesus before Pilate

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the court of the Roman governor. It was now morning. The Jews did not enter lest they become unclean (by coming into the house of a pagan) and be unable to eat the Passover meal. So Pilate went out and asked: "What charge do you bring against this man?"

They answered: "If he were not a criminal, we would not be handing him over to you," Pilate said: "take him, yourselves and judge him according to your own law." But they replied: "We ourselves are not allowed to put anyone to death."

It was clear from this what kind of death Jesus was to die, according to what Jesus himself had foretold.

Pilate then entered the court again, called Jesus and asked him: "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied: "Are you saying this of your own accord, or did others say it to you?"

Pilate answered: "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the Chief Priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered: "My kingship does not come from this world. If I were a king like those of this world, my guards would have fought to save me from being handed over to the Jews. But my kingship is not from here."

Pilate asked him: "So, you are a king?" Jesus answered: "Just as you say, I am a king. For this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth hears my voice."

Pilate said: "What is truth?"

Pilate then went out to the Jews again and said: "I find no crime in this man, Now according to a custom, I must release a prisoner of yours at the Passover. With your agreement I will release for you the King of the Jews."

But they insisted and cried out: "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Jn. 18:28-40

Commentary on the Text

The religious leaders were concerned about their ritual belief that entering the house of a pagan would make them unclean and so unfit to celebrate the coming Passover. But they had no concern about the injustice of condemning an innocent man.

This is why Pilate has to keep coming out to talk with the religious leaders. However St. John has Pilate come out and go back in seven times. This is a clue that on the seventh time, John reveals the climax that he has been leading up to. John has used this number 7 many times in his Gospel, to help his readers identify the key idea he wants to emphasise. (C.f. Unit 11.1 Page 20).

The religious leaders wanted to avoid defilement so that they could sacrifice the Paschal lambs that evening, but they are bringing pressure on Pilate to sacrifice the "Lamb of God".

The religious leaders claimed that they were not allowed to put anyone to death. This did not stop them stoning Stephen (Acts 7:58), but they wanted to avoid responsibility for killing Jesus and they wanted him to die by crucifixion. (Deut. 21:23)

Jesus, with hands bound like a captive, acts like he is in charge. Pilate, who has the authority, is captive to his own ambitions,, to wanting to keep his high office and to the opinions of the religious leaders.

In these first conversations between Pilate and Jesus, Pilate's viewpoint is political. Jesus invites Pilate to see what is happening from a deeper viewpoint, but Pilate is not capable of doing so. What is truth?

Jesus is bearing witness to truth. Pilate is bearing witness to the limitations of a political viewpoint in seeing what is really happening.

What Pilate can do, from his political viewpoint is score points against the religious leaders. He does this by calling Jesus the King of the Jews.

The name Bar—Abbas means son of the father.

Jesus and Pilate

Then Pilate had Jesus taken away and scourged. The soldiers also twisted thorns into a crown and put it on his head. They threw a cloak of royal purple around his shoulders and began coming up to him and saluting him, "Hail, king of the Jews", and they struck him on the face.

Pilate went outside yet another time and said to the Jews: "Look, I am bringing him out and I want you to know that I find no crime in him." Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak and Pilate pointed to him and said" "Here is the man."

On seeing him the chief priests and the guards cried out: "Crucify him." Pilate replied: "Take him, yourselves, and have him crucified, for I find no case against him." The Jews then said, "We have a Law, and according to the Law this man must die because he made himself Son of God."

When Pilate heard this he was more afraid, And coming back into the court he asked Jesus: "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him: "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have the power to release you and the power to crucify you?" Jesus replied: "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is even more guilty."

Because of this Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out: "If you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar, Anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar."

When Pilate heard this, he had Jesus brought outside to the place called the Stone Floor - in Hebrew Gabbatha - and there he sat down in the judges seat. It was the Preparation Day for the Passover, about noon. So Pilate said to the Jews: "Here is your king." But they cried out: "Away! Take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate answered: "Shall I crucify your king?" And the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified, and they took charge of him.

Jn. 19: 1 - 16

Commentary on the text

Isaiah 50: 6. I gave my back to those who struck me and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard.

The soldiers mock Jesus, using the words by which the Roman Emperor was greeted: Hail, Caesar.

Pilate judges that Jesus is innocent three times. In Roman law to make a judgement three times made the judgement legally definitive. It could not be appealed.

Here is the man. This scene is very famous; it has been painted many times. Many cultures and groups have competitions to find the man and expressions such as: you are the man; right man. These may be shadows of this scene from John's gospel.

The religious leaders see they have failed to have Jesus judged for a political crime and now tell Pilate their real reason for wanting Jesus dead. Pilate is superstitious (afraid) and asks Jesus the question (where are you from?) that so many people have asked. Jesus does not answer because Pilate has already said he is not interested in the truth.

Jesus judges Pilate. Pilate should exercise his authority properly and if he fails to do so, he is guilty. The religious leaders are more guilty because they say they can see. (see Jn. 9:41)

Pilate has political enemies in Rome and fears that the religious leaders will make a case against him. He is afraid he will lose his appointment as governor.

John reminds his readers that sentence is passed on Jesus at the very hour (about noon) when the Paschal lambs were being slaughtered elsewhere in the city.

The religious leaders are responsible for keeping the covenant with their God. O Lord our God, other lords beside you have ruled over us, but we acknowledge your name alone (Isaiah 26:13). When the religious leaders say: We have no king but Caesar they reject the govenant with God. They do this at the very time preparations are being made for the Passover, which was the religious action of renewing the covenant with God.

Several years later their new king would destroy their temple and their nation.

Jesus is crucified

Bearing his own cross, Jesus went out of the city to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew: Golgotha. There he was crucified and with him two others, one on either side and Jesus was in the middle.

Pilate had a notice written and fastened to the cross which read: Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews. Many Jewish people saw this title because the place where Jesus was crucified was very close to the city. It was, moreover, written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. The chief priests said to Pilate: "Do not write 'the king of the Jews' but 'this man claimed to be the king of the Jews." Pilate answered: "What I have written, I have written,"

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each of them. But as for the tunic it was woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said: "Let us not tear it, but cast lots to decide who will get it." This fulfilled the words of Scripture: They divided my clothing among them: they cast lots for my garment. And this is what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary, who was wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple, he said to his mother: "woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple: "This is your mother." And from that moment the disciple took her into his own house.

After that, Jesus knew that all was now finished and he said: "I am thirsty" as it was written in the Scripture. A jar full of bitter wine stood there; so, putting a sponge soaked in the wine on a hyssop stalk, they raised it to his lips. Jesus took the wine and said: "It is accomplished." Then he bowed his head and gave up the spirit.

Jn. 19: 17-30

Commentary on the text

Jesus was crucified with two others: He was numbered with the transgressors. (Isaiah 53: 12)

Pilate is determined to have the last word. He proclaims to the whole world (by writing in the three world languages of that time) that Jesus is king of the Jews. Jesus had said: When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all people to myself. (Jn. 12: 32).

John points out that even the soldiers, by their actions, were fulfilling the words of Scripture - that is fulfilling the providence of God. God was working to bring good out of this most evil and unjust action.

Some Christians struggle to find a right relationship with Mary, the mother of Jesus. In the first creation, Eve was with Adam (the man). Here in the new creation Mary is with the new Adam. Eve was condemned to bring forth children in pain, Mary brings forth disciples - the children of the new creation - in her pain.

Jesus gives his mother to be mother of all disciples. And from that moment the disciple took her into his own house. Every disciple is invited to do the same. Mary is grieving, but also silent, pondering deeply to try and see what her God is doing in this most evil and unjust situation. Many people have discovered in the depths of their own hearts strength, comfort, courage and new meaning while standing with Mary at the foot of the cross.

I am thirsty: Jesus is tortured by thirst, He is thirsting for the world to open its heart to God and receive the love which it was his mission to bring. He is also thirsting for the selfless love of disciples who will follow him even to suffering to transform the world.

It is accomplished: What has been accomplished? All the plans and promises of the Old Testament; all the yearnings of the human spirit; all God's plans to deal with human sin and evil and injustice. This is the hour when the world is changed forever.

Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Jesus finally was empowered to 'let go and let God'. John then begins to describe what God does through the death of Jesus.

The pierced Christ

As it was Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross during the Sabbath, as this Sabbath was a very solemn day. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the condemned men broken, so they might take the bodies away.

The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who had been crucified with Jesus. When they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead; so they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a lance and immediately there came out blood and water.

This is the testimony given by one who saw it: his testimony is true. And Another knows that he speaks the truth. This man gives his witness so that you may believe as well. All this happened to fulfil the words of Scripture, Not one of his bones will be broken. Another text says: They shall look on him whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea approached Pilate, for he was a disciple of Jesus, although secretly, for fear of the Jews. And he asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate agreed. So, he came and took away the body.

Nicodemus, the man who earlier had come to Jesus by night, also came and brought a jar of myrrh mixed with aloes, about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, following the burial custom of the Jews.

There was a garden in the place where Jesus had been crucified and, in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. As the tomb was very near, they buried Jesus there because they had no time left before the Jewish Preparation Day.

Jn. 19: 31-42

Commentary on the text

There was a law that the bodies of criminals should be buried the same day. (Deut. 21: 22—23). Breaking their legs would hasten death because those hanging on the cross would suffocate.

John sees the deep significance of the pierced side / heart of Jesus and the blood and water that flow out from his heart. John does this by referring to the Old Testament:

Not one of his bones will be broken: The reference is to Psalm 34 which is partly reproduced on the next page. It is a promise that God is close to the broken hearted.

It is also a reference to the Paschal lambs. Those preparing the lambs for slaughter were told not to break their bones (Ex. 12: 46)

They shall look on him whom they have pierced. The reference is to Zechariah 12: 10 - 13:1, which is reproduced on the next page. God promises to pour out the spirit of compassion on his broken people.

John sees the water that came out of Jesus' heart as a sign that the Spirit of God had now been poured out over the world. This is the final sign of all the many references to living water in John's gospel and throughout the Old Testament.

The blood is the life force; Jesus pours out his life to persuade us of his love. (See 1 Jn. 1:7)

John gives this witness so that you may believe as well.

Christians have seen the water and blood as signs of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, the means by which we receive God's love at the beginning and throughout our life's journey.

The final scene of Jesus' burial is quiet and sombre; two, secret disciples find the courage to use their influence to have Jesus buried with dignity.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

As well as the activities recommended on page 17, your students might like to draw / paint a
picture of their understanding and appreciation of the blood and water flowing from the pierced
heart of Jesus to bring new life to the whole world.



Behold the man.

Psalm 34: 19-23

The Lord is close to the broken hearted and helps those crushed in spirit. Many are the troubles of the just, but the Lord delivers them out of them all.

He keeps intact all of their bones, and none of them will be broken. Evil will slay the wicked; the enemies of the just will be doomed. But the Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who trust in him will be doomed.



I will pour out a spirit of compassion on the family of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They will look on the one they have pierced. They will mourn for the slain one as for an only child and weep bitterly as for a firstborn.....

On that day a spring will well up for the family of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse themselves from sin and defilement.

These pictures and texts may help your students in their quiet reflection and journaling of the appropriate scenes in the previous pages.

12.4 COMMITMENT TO LIFE

In his letter to all Christians-The Joy of the Gospel-Pope Francis writes:

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them;

I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord".

The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: "Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace". How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost!

The suggested activities in this part of the Unit, and in the previous section, are designed to help your students "to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ."

In the final two Chapters of his Gospel, St. John offers three pictures of the risen Lord with his disciples.

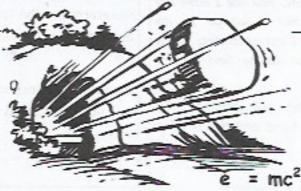
In the first picture, through the person of Mary of Magdala, St. John teaches us how we can experience the presence of the risen Lord today. This is through the practice of quiet prayer of the heart, sitting still in our confusion and troubles and waiting for the Lord to call our name.

In the second picture, John teaches us the four key performance indicators of those who have met and been touched by the risen Lord.

In the third picture, John teaches us how Jesus accepts our doubts and can bring a stronger faith out of whatever doubts we have.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- 1. For each of the scenes in the following pages, invite your students to:
 - Sit with Jesus in quiet prayer and listen to what he says.
 - Reflect on how this scene could be applied to their own journey.
 - Journal about their reflections.
 - Share their reflections with their companion.



The Lord is risen

Now, on the first day after the Sabbath, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark and she saw that the stone blocking the tomb had been moved away. So, she ran to Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved. And she said to them: "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have laid him."

Peter then set out with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They ran together but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down and saw the linen clothes lying flat, but he did not enter.

Then Simon Peter came following him and entered the tomb; he too, saw the linen clothes lying flat. The napkin, which had been put around his head was not lying flat like the other linen clothes but it stayed rolled up in its place. Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in; he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know that the Scriptures foretold his rising from the dead.

After that the disciples went home again.

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb and as she wept she bent down to look inside; and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said: "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered: "Because they have taken my Lord and I don't know where they have put him."

As she said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not recognise him. Jesus said to her: "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and answered him: "If you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and remove him."

Jesus said to her: "Mary". She turned and said to him: "Rabboni" - which means Master. Jesus said to her: "Do not hold on to me; you see I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them: I am ascending to my Father, who is your Father, to my God, who is your God."

So Mary of Magdala went and said to the disciples: "I have seen the Lord and this is what he said to me."

Jn. 20: 1- 18

Commentary on the text

John continues to describe what God does through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It changes everything.

Most Christian groups now worship on 'the first day after the Sabbath' to remember and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. It is called *The Lord's Day.* (C.f. Acts 20: 7).

While it was still dark: The disciples were still caught in the darkness of Jesus' death and their own feelings of hopelessness. For them, the light of the world had not yet risen.

The stone had been moved away: To experience the risen Lord, some stone may have to be moved away from our hearts.

John may have described how Jesus' burial clothes were neatly arranged to challenge one of the stories spread by the religious leaders that robbers had stolen his body.

John and Peter both witnessed an empty tomb. Only John believed. The author is teaching us that one who loves can see the deeper meaning of events more clearly.

In the story of Mary of Magdala, John teaches all disciples how one who loves, and knows they are loved, can transform even the tomb into a place of revelation and deep joy. John teaches how the disciple can meet and recognise the risen Lord today. We can do this by:

- Going into the garden of our own hearts;
- Staying there with all our questions, our lack of understanding, our sadness;
- Waiting for Jesus to call our name.

Jesus chose a woman to be the first witness to his resurrection. The law courts of that time would not recognise the witness of a woman, but Jesus did.

Whenever we encounter Jesus in a new or deeper way, he sends us on mission to our brothers and sisters.

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit

On the evening of that day, the first day after the Sabbath, the doors were locked where the disciples were, because of their fear of the Jews, but Jesus came and stood amongst them. He said to them: "Peace be with you," then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples kept looking at the Lord and were full of joy.

Again Jesus said to them: "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." Then he breathed on them and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit; for those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained."

Jn. 20: 19-25

Oh breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew. That I may love what thou dost love, and do what thou wouldst do.

Oh breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure. Until with thee I have one will, to do and to endure.

Oh breathe on me, breath of God, until my heart is pure., Until this earthly part of me glows with thy fire divine.

Oh breathe on me, breath of God, so shall I never die, But live with thee the perfect life Of thine eternity.

Commentary on the text

This scene is Pentecost for St. John. In this scene he spells out more clearly the scene when the soldier pierced Jesus' side and blood and water flowed out.

What doors do we lived locked behind because of our fears?

What stories do a person's scars tell?

In the previous scene St John taught us how to meet the risen Lord. Now he teaches us the key performance indicators of anyone who has met and been touched by the risen Lord. These are the four key indicators of Christian discipleship and evangelisation.

- An experience of peace and joy.
- Awareness of being sent on mission.
- Being baptised in the Holy Spirit.
- Empowerment to forgive.

Then he breathed on them: God breathed life into the first man, Adam. Jesus breathes his own Spirit into his disciples to empower them to have communion with the Father and live a new way of life.

John has been preparing us for this gift of Jesus' Spirit since the beginning of his Gospel. (1:33; 4:14; 3:5-6; 7:37; 14:16; 15:26; 16:8; 17:26;)

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us his Spirit. (1Jn 4:13)

It might be useful to help your students revise what was written in Unit 11.4 about forgiving and retaining sins.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- In their quiet prayer and reflection (Page 25), encourage your students to reflect on any doors they
 might have locked in their lives. Who are they trying to keep out? Who /what are they afraid of?
- They might also like to reflect on:
 - the stories behind the scars of their lives;
 - their experience of peace and joy;
 - their experience of being sent on mission;
 - their awareness of being baptised in the Spirit;
 - their awareness of being empowered to forgive.

Jesus and Thomas

Thomas, the Twin, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he replied: "Until I have seen in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

Eight days later, the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. Despite the locked doors Jesus came in. He stood among them and said: "Peace be with you."

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands; stretch out your hand and put it into my side. Doubt no longer but believe,"

Thomas then said: "You are my Lord and my God". Jesus replied: "You believe because you see me, don't you? Happy are those who believe although they do not see me."

Conclusion

There are many other signs that Jesus gave in the presence of his disciples but they are not recorded in this book. These are recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; believe and you will have life through his name.

Jn. 20: 26-31

Commentary on the text

There is a lot of Thomas in each of us. We are not content to learn about Jesus or about life, from others. We want to experience it for ourselves.

One of the big cultural divides today is the so called conflict between scientific knowledge and faith knowledge. Thomas wants to experiment and discover the truth for himself. Jesus welcomes this and invites Thomas to discover the truth for himself.

Thomas once asked Jesus: How can we know the way? Now Jesus does show Thomas the way. It is the way of a personal encounter with the risen Lord, of experiencing his wounds, both in quiet prayer of contemplation, in the wounds of our brothers and sisters and in our own wounds.

The doors were locked. Our fears do not stop Jesus from coming to us and inviting us into a deeper relationship with him.

Thomas experiences Jesus' faithful love for him; this empowers Thomas to respond with faithful love towards Jesus and deeper insight into who Jesus is for him. You are my Lord and my God.

Jesus praises those who have not yet had a personal experience of his presence and love, but who still believe in him.

John's Gospel is about the struggle between belief and unbelief.:

He came to what was his own and his own people did not accept him. (1:10)

Even though Jesus had done so many miraculous signs among them, they didn't believe in him (12:37)

So that you may believe and have life through his name. (20:31)

Appendix: Jesus and Peter and John

After this Jesus revealed himself to the disciples by the lake of Tiberias. This is how it happened: Simon Peter, Thomas, called the Twin, Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together. Simon Peter said: "I am going fishing". They replied: "We will come with you", and they went out and got into the boat. But they caught nothing all night.

When day had already broken, Jesus was standing on the shore, but he disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus called to them: "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered: "Nothing." Then he said to them: "throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they had lowered the net, they were not able to pull it in because of the great number of fish,

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter: "It is the Lord!" At these words Simon Peter put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and jumped into the water. The other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish; they were not far from land, about a hundred meters,

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire there with fish on it and some bread. Jesus said to them: "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed into the boat and pulled the net to shore. It was full of big fish - one hundred and fifty three - but in spite of this the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them: "Come and have breakfast," and not one of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' for they knew it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them and he did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples after rising from the dead.

Commentary on the text

This final Chapter in John's gospel was probably written by some of John's disciples, people like us who had not seen but had believed.

Their story is about a group of believers who are going about their everyday activities, but without much joy or success or sense of achievement. "But they caught nothing all night".

Then they hear a voice which comes from a distance, from across the water or from deep within. The voice is friendly and asks about the situation they are in.

The voice challenges them to try again, to do things a bit differently. They may think this is a waste of time but when they respond to the voice they are surprised by the results.

Those who live in me and I in them bear much fruit but apart from me you can do nothing (Jn. 15:5).

Love recognises who the voice belongs to. I will reveal myself to the one who loves me. (Jn. 14:21).

The man of action immediately responds.

The disciples find that Jesus has prepared a meal for them. The many meals in John's gospel all point towards the Eucharist, where disciples experience his hospitality and faithful and forgiving love.

One hundred and fifty three is symbolic of the many people the Lord would draw to himself through the mission of his disciples. And when I am lifted up from the earth I will draw all to myself. (Jn. 12:32).

The net was not torn because it was under the guidance of Simon Peter. Jesus' disciples will be united if they remain under the guidance of the one appointed by Jesus.

Appendix: Jesus and Peter and John

After they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He answered: "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." And Jesus said: "Feed my lambs."

A second time Jesus said to him: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" and Peter answered: "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." And Jesus said: "Look after my sheep."

And a third time he said to him: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was saddened because Jesus asked him a third time, 'Do you love me?', and he said: "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you."

Jesus then said, "Feed my sheep. Truly I say to you, when you were young you put on your belt and walked where you liked. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another will put a belt around you and lead you where you do not wish to go." Jesus spoke like this to show the kind of death by which Peter was to glorify God. And he added: "Follow me."

Peter looked back and saw that the disciple Jesus loved was following as well, the one who had reclined close to Jesus at the supper and had asked him, "Lord, who is to betray you?" On seeing him Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain until I come, does that concern you? Follow me."

Because of this the rumour spread among the brothers that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus had not said to Peter, "He will not die", but "suppose I want him to remain until I come."

It is this disciple who testifies about the things he has recorded here and we know that his testimony is true. But Jesus did many other things; if all were written down, I think that the world itself would not hold the books recording them.

Jn. 21: 15 - 24

Commentary on the text

Jesus does not ask Simon Peter if he is sorry for denying him, or why he did it or how he will make up for his sin and failure or if he will promise never to do it again. Jesus goes to the heart of the matter and asks the deepest question, challenging Peter to respond from his heart. This is how Peter experienced forgiveness.

Peter's sadness when Jesus asked him the third time is the sadness of a humble repentant heart; it is healing sadness.

Feed my lambs: The sheep belong to Jesus. Peter is given the work of feeding them. Peter's mission of taking care of the flock is out of his love for Jesus, not for any sense of power or financial gain. (see 1Peter 5: 1-5).

All disciples are asked by Jesus: Do you love me? When disciples can answer "yes", despite their sins and weakness, Jesus gives them a mission to give pastoral care to his flock and to follow him out of love.

Peter died a martyrs death in the year 66 or 67 in Rome. John was still alive in the year 90. He was the last of the witnesses of Christ and many thought he would not die until the Lord would come again. The writer of this appendix insists this was not what Jesus promised.

Jesus' final words to Peter - follow me - are the last words spoken by Jesus in the Gospel. They are addressed to every reader of the Gospel.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Invite your students to discuss and plan how they can build their commitment to life into their graduation ceremonies.
- Invite them to reflect on the vision and mission statement of the Catholic Church:
 - What do they experience being called by the Father, sent by Jesus and moved by the Holy Spirit to be and to do?

THE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

VISION

We, the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea are alive in Christ witnessing the love of God in the world

MISSION

Called by the Father, sent by Jesus
and moved by the Holy Spirit,
we strive to promote God's Kingdom
by witnessing the Good News,
by fostering growth in holiness for all
and by encouraging fuller participation
in Church and society,
so as to transform the world
through the love of Christ.

