

John 20: 19 – end

‘Baptism and Easter’

Introduction ...

I wonder if the term ‘Fake news’ will still be around when Raphael is 8 years old ... or 18 years old?

For many of us here – it wasn’t when we were those kind of ages. Yet it’s a phrase that’s entered our everyday vocabulary ... and so I suspect will be a part of Raphael’s world.

Easter and Fake news ...

So – when he is 8 or 18 – and he is asked by friends – that the Easter story – **“How do you know that the Resurrection of Jesus – isn’t just fake news”** – how might he reply?

And take note – that part of his reply will come from what he has learnt from and experienced with those of us who are here today.

How would we answer the question?

Let’s look at some of the evidence:

- The testimony of Mary Magdelene who finds the tomb empty and speaks to Jesus;
- The testimony of the disciples encountering Jesus whose hands and side they see;
- The testimony of Peter and the disciples talking to the people of Jerusalem;
- The fact that these early disciples were prepared to be put to death for their belief in the resurrection – very unlikely therefore that they had made it up;
- The fact that Jesus’ body was never produced – and both Jewish and Roman authorities would have been desperate to find and show the body;
- The changes in behaviour of the disciples from fearful to confident;
- The history of the Christian church for 2 millennia – validating the words at the end of our Gospel reading **“These words are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and that, through believing, you may have life in his name.”** As Jesus said: **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”**

All of these help us to be confident that the Resurrection is not Fake News. All of this we can pass onto Raphael and other children. So that – if they too are convinced – they can answer their friends along the same lines.

But – as I hinted earlier – this is only part of what leads to a Christian faith, a Christian conviction.

**Own Experience ...** For Raphael, as for all of us – there’s more. There is our own experience – our own relationship with Jesus through the power of the Spirit. In the first part of the Gospel reading – Jesus breathes on them and says: **“Receive the Holy Spirit”**... Christian baptism is in the name of “The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.” Raphael today is formally welcomed into God’s family – and one of the amazing privileges of this is to be given the Holy Spirit.

And so – the way in which Raphael will, in the future, answer that question **“How do you know that the Resurrection isn’t fake news?”** will depend in part on learning about the event from us and others – but also on how he chooses to develop his relationship with Jesus – facilitated by us, yes, but also up to him – as it is to each of us. **Amen.**

Adapted from: [Explore and respond \(rootsontheweb.com\)](https://www.rootsontheweb.com)