



HOLY SATURDAY REFLECTION 2020

Did Jesus really descend into hell?

Recently a devoted 84 year old Catholic man said to me; *“For many years I have said the Creed at Mass and with everyone else I say that Jesus descended into hell, can you help me make sense of it?”* I bet that this man is definitely not alone!

It is a safe scientific assumption to make that human beings have been roaming the surface of the earth for at least 100,000 years. And Jesus Christ was born into this world about 2,000 years ago, this being only 2% of that time.

It is traditionally believed that people who have died in good faith with God before the coming of Jesus Christ went to a place that the Jewish people call *Sheol*. It is a form of the unknown underworld. Jesus actually speaks about this place in the parable of the rich young man in Luke’s Gospel Chapter 16: 19-31. It is believed in the early Christian apostolic teachings that after Jesus died, he descended into the underworld and opened the gates of heaven for those people who had died in good faith with God.

This teaching is consistent with the belief that Jesus Christ by way of his birth, death and resurrection is central to our belief in salvation. It is also that action that bridges the connection between the old and the new testaments. The study of the last things is *Eschatology*, it’s an ancient Greek word. *Fr Martin R Maunsell*