

**Newsletter for the week commencing 18th/19th April 2020**

**The Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Sunday) (A)**

**First Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47**

**Psalm 117 Response:**  Give thanks to the Lord for he is good for his love has no end.

**Second Reading: The first letter of St Peter 1: 3-9**

**Father John writes:**

I want to thank all of you who sent me Easter cards - it meant a lot to me: also thanks for the Easter offerings and the weekly Sunday Gift Aid (still in their envelopes and uncounted until our Money Counters are in action again and can Bank it). I am gradually getting more accustomed to celebrating Mass alone in our Church. I don’t give myself a little homily as I usually do on weekdays – when I told someone this, they said ‘I suppose you were frightened of putting yourself to sleep!’

However, one thing that has struck me quite powerfully from the Scripture readings for the days after Easter, is how often Jesus’ followers mistook Jesus for someone else when He appeared to them, or thought he was a gardener or a ‘ghost’. When they did realise who it was, they were completely at a loss over what to say to Him, either struck dumb for a moment, or if they did manage to utter something, it mostly wasn’t very appropriate. This is what makes the post Resurrection appearances so real and powerful – it is a genuinely human reaction to shock and surprise.

It is different for us. Over the years we have so often heard these accounts of Jesus’ appearances after his Resurrection that we can easily take them for granted. I find that the only way to recover something of the wonder of his appearances is to get inside the skin of Mary Magdalen, or of the disciples at Emmaus, or of doubting Thomas, or maybe most powerfully of the women in the tomb who got the news from the young man there that ‘Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, has risen and is not here. The women went out of the tomb and fled, seized with trembling and bewilderment’ (Mark’s Gospel).

Later Jesus showed himself to the Eleven while they were at table. He reproached them for their unbelief and stubbornness in refusing to believe those who had seen him after he had risen (Mark). Can we accept this reproach?

We tend to think we would not have reacted like the first disciples. But I wonder. It is not so much the disciples first reaction that matters, but that they spent the rest of their lives spreading the Good News, ”Jesus Christ has risen from the dead.”

**Your Prayers are asked for:**

**Those recently deceased: Bozena Cloutier Wonska RIP (**Chris Lacki’s last sister)

**Those ill or infirm:** Joe Adams, Ellie Lawrence, Anne Bryant, Eric Booth, Patricia Hook, Elena Peck (senior), Marjorie Dumbleton, Josie Payne, Joe Venables and all those self-isolating or suffering from COVID-19

**Those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time**: Elizabeth Armstrong, Vera Ware, Ellen Marren, Foundation Mass for Joan Carey, Nellie Southcott, Elsie Browne, Deborah Burke, Bernard Grayner, John Stanley, Jack Holman, Ellen Rimmer, Margaret Toke-Nicholls, Florence Primarolo, Karen Vidler, Gwen Terrett, Catherine Town and Patricia Walden.

**The Pandemic – a prayer**

Almighty and eternal God, our refuge in every danger, to whom we turn in our distress; in faith we pray- look with compassion on the afflicted, grant eternal rest to the dead, comfort to mourners, healing to the sick, peace to the dying, strength to healthcare workers, wisdom to our leaders, and the courage to reach out to all in love so that together we may give glory to your holy name. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

A prayer for our parish

*O God, protector of all who hope in you, bless your people, keep them safe, defend them, prepare them, that, free from sin and safe from the enemy, they may persevere always in your love. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.*

**New Pilgrim Path Website of the Week.** The worldwide Jesuit online phenomenon that is ‘Sacred Space’ has introduced a 14 day ‘Isolation’ retreat specifically for the Coronavirus crisis. The retreat is structured around themes loosely based on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius. Each day has a specific theme, a preparatory prayer, an introduction to the themes, three related scripture quotes, some questions for reflection and a closing prayer. People can use this resource in a number of ways:

• follow the programme for the 14 days;

• dip into the themes that speak to you, for example the meditation on fear;

• or use the meditations as daily prayer.

It can be used in any of these ways to get reassurance that God is with you during this difficult time, to deepen your prayer life or to provide a safe space away from worry and anxiety. Access this valuable spiritual resource at   [www.newpilgrimpath.ie](http://www.newpilgrimpath.ie)

**A kind offer of support** for anyone living **Biddenden** and surrounding area. Clive and Sue Thomas are happy to help in any way they can. Their contact number is 07500 041775.

Another suggestion for a good read is “Once upon a River” by Diane Setterfield. This is a gentle, moving story with an uplifting ending. Everyone I have recommended it to has really enjoyed it. It is quite un-put-downable!!

And finally, some light relief…

Sorry to hear that the Formula 1 official, who waves the flag at the start and end of the races has retired, he said 'It’s fair to say I've had a chequered career.'

My cross-eyed friend lost his job as a teacher because he couldn't control his pupils

I’ve decided to write jokes about eyes. The cornea the better.

Just been to the Doctors. He said drink orange juice after a hot bath. Took me ages to drink that bath.

Even though we have at least another three weeks of lockdown,

please stick to the guidelines/rules set down by the government regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important for the health of everyone.

Take care of yourselves and your loved ones.

**God bless.**