

Parish of Malin (Clonca) Sunday 10th May 2020
Fifth Sunday Of Easter (Year A Week 1)



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Details on the times of online **Masses and Prayers** for the Covid 19 Crisis : <https://www.catholicbishops.ie>
Mass Leaflets for each Sunday are available in the churches and parish shops along with the weekly Bulletin.

Finance: Parish Collections : When the pandemic began it was hoped that we could simply wait until practical restrictions on normal church services were restored and at that point resolve the issue of outstanding parish collections. Clearly it is going to be a considerable time in the future before we can resume normal gatherings in Church. In the past, Malin parish normal income was approximately €2000 per week. In the meantime, the diocese has been examining possible online payment platforms, one of which could be placed on our parish website, allowing parishioners to donate online to their own parish. The diocese has been investigating reputable companies, with a view to recommending an option to parishes. This process is at an advanced stage. Once there is a clear plan, full details will be provided here. Meanwhile, parishioners who wish to contribute to the parish can do so by cheque made out to “Malin Parochial “ and can leave them in Emmaus Parochial House, Drumcarbit, or post them, or simply keep your weekly envelopes until it is safe to donate them, and as always, there will be opportunities for “heroic” generosity in the future !!!

Sincere Thanks to those who have sent in their collection envelopes, cheques and donations for the Parish during the past week.

Fifth Sunday of Easter 5A – John 14:1-14 Jesus said “Do not let your hearts be troubled”

What troubles your heart today?

For all of us the Covid 19 pandemic has caused great concern about our own health and safety and that of our friends and families. Along with this we have worries about changes to our lifestyles and the negative impact at local, national and international level. “Normality” has been disrupted, perhaps permanently. Things are changed utterly. We face an undefined period of uncertainty at many levels. Forced changes always result in stress and readjustment.

Despite what Jesus says about not letting our hearts be troubled, our hearts are troubled. What would you add to my list? What is troubling your heart today? None of us get through this life without a troubled heart. I don't think we can look at the pain of the world today, the suffering of a loved one, or our own wounds and hurts and not have a troubled heart.

That's the context in which I hear Jesus say, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” It's not that different from the context in which Jesus said those words. It is the night of the last supper. Jesus has announced his departure from this world, his death. Feet have been washed. Judas has left the table and stepped into the nighttime of betrayal. Peter will break his silence with a threefold denial. Thomas is lost and asks, “How can we know the way?” Philip has lost his centre and can't see what is right in front of him. “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied,” he says.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled,” Jesus says. “Do not let your hearts be troubled?” Is Jesus really serious about that? Does he know what is happening in our lives and our world? How can Jesus say that with a straight face when he was troubled at seeing Mary and the Jews weeping at the death of Lazarus (John 11:33), when he said that his own “soul is troubled” (John 12:27), and when St. John tells us that Jesus “was troubled in spirit” (John 13:21)? What is Jesus telling us? It's not as if there is an on-off switch for troubled hearts. How do we begin to make sense of today's gospel in a world whose heart is constantly troubled?

It's not hard to understand why this text is so often used at funerals. Death troubles our hearts and we want to find some balance, stability, and harmony. This text, however, is about more than the after life. It has something to say right here and right now. It speaks to the very circumstances that trouble our hearts today.

Think about times when your heart has been troubled. Maybe it is now. What does that feel like? We all experience it in our own ways but see if this sounds familiar: isolated, paralyzed, overwhelmed, powerless, off balance, out of control, disconnected, afraid, thoughts spinning in your head, no stability, despair, grief, tears, anger. Do you recognize any of those?

In the midst of a troubled heart the unspoken question is this: Will the centre hold or is everything collapsing around us? Thomas and Philip are feeling the collapse. Much of the world is. Maybe you are too. Will the centre hold? That's our question.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.” Jesus recognizes that our hearts are troubled. He is not warning us about a future condition. He knows the troubling has already begun. He can see it in us because he's experienced it within himself. He also knows that our lives and the world are not defined by or limited to what troubles.

What if not letting our hearts be troubled begins with looking into our hearts and seeing and naming what troubles? That means facing our selves, our lives, our world. That may be the first and most difficult thing Jesus asks of us in today's gospel. “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Thomas speaks for us all. We've lost our centre. How do we recentre? Where do we go when it seems everything is collapsing around us?

Here's the paradox. Sometimes we have to lose our centre in order to find it. I want to be clear about this. I'm not suggesting that God purposely de-centres us. De-centring happens. It's a part of life. It's a part of the human condition. Sometimes it comes out of circumstances we didn't create or choose. Other times it is a consequence of our choices or actions. Regardless, Jesus says that is not a place to stay or a way to live. It is not the life he lives or offer us.

If your heart is troubled then it's time to re-centre. Re-centring doesn't mean our hearts won't be troubled. It doesn't necessarily fix the problem, whatever it might be. It means that our lives are tethered to something greater than ourselves. It means that our hearts are held secure by the Divine Life and we are not free falling into the abyss. Jesus is reminding us that there is a centre and it is not us. It is not any country, any international organisation or any political structures or policies. It is not our success, accomplishments, position, or power. We do not have to be the centre nor do we need to establish it. In fact, we can't. Instead, we awaken to it. We already know the way to and the place of this centre Jesus says.

“Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied,” Philip says to Jesus. He's mistakenly accepted that the Father is apart from, outside of, and distant from himself. The centre, however, is within. The Father's house is within. The kingdom is within. Wherever you go, there is the centre. Whatever you face, there is the centre. Whoever you are, there is the centre. Regardless of what troubles, there is the centre. Wherever you are, there is the centre. Not because you are the centre, but because God is within.

In the language of today's gospel the centre is the Father's house and there are many dwelling places in this house. In the Father's house there is a dwelling place for every troubled heart. The invitation in the gospel is to see the dwelling places as the ways God's life intersects our own: mercy and forgiveness, justice, generosity, compassion, healing, love, beauty, wisdom, hope, courage, joy, intimacy. These are the dwelling places for troubled hearts, places of re-centring. Every time we live into and express those qualities in our way of being, with our words, or by our actions, we regain our centre, restore balance, and take up residence in the Father's house.

We might ask ourselves what in us today needs re-centring?

How might centredness, balance, and harmony within ourselves help us see and respond to our troubles or the troubles of the world differently?

How can we ensure that in the midst of troubles our hearts can maintain a normal rhythm and beat with God's life?