

Parish of Malin (Clonca) Sunday 11th April 2021
Devine Mercy Sunday (Year B Week 2)



Fr. Peter Devlin P.P.
Malin
074 93 70615

Fr. Charley Logue C.C.
Malin Head
074 93 70134

Mass Times
St. Patrick's Church – No Mass
Star of the Sea Church – No Mass
St. Mary's Church – No Mass

E-Mail: malinparish@hotmail.com

Web Site: www.malinparish.ie

Facebook: Malin Parish

Details on the times of online Masses and Prayers for the Covid 19 Crisis: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie>

Sincere Thanks to those who have sent in their collection envelopes, cheques and donations for the Parish during the past week. Please make cheques payable to "Malin Parochial".

Baptisms in Malin Parish: Baptisms can now be celebrated in the parish with a maximum of six people.

Parish Draw: Thanks to all our Promoters for organising the Parish Draw so efficiently. The draw for the weeks of April will be done at the end of the month. There are still a few lines left for anyone who has not yet joined the draw. Contact Fr Devlin .

Trocaire Collection: Parishioners are asked to send their donations directly to Trocaire using the Freepost addressed envelope that was in the pack for Lent.. The address is Caoimhe de Barra, CEO Trocaire, Freepost NS244 Maynooth, Co Kildare.

Gospel John: 20:19-31 The presence of the risen Jesus banishes fear and brings peace to his friends

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Unlocking our doors

Most houses are well alarmed nowadays; the computerised alarm has become as basic an item as table and chairs. We also need to have good strong locks; long gone, at least in the cities and towns, are the days when you could just leave the key in the door, and let neighbours ramble in casually for a chat and a cup of tea. We are more fearful about our security than we used to be, and this fear and anxiety has led us to take more precautions to protect ourselves. Fear of what others can do to us tends to close us in on ourselves, not just in the physical sense of getting stronger door-locks, but also in other senses. We tend to be somewhat withdrawn around people whom we perceive to be critical. We are slow to open up to someone we think will judge us. We hesitate to share ideas and plans we might have with those who are known not to suffer fools gladly. Fear of others can often hold us back and stunt our growth.

In the gospel we find the disciples locking themselves into a room because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Even after an excited Mary Magdalene came to them from the empty tomb announcing that she had seen the Lord, this was not enough to overcome their fear. What had been done to Jesus could be done to them. .. which led to their hiding in self-imposed confinement. The turning point came when the risen Lord himself appeared to them behind their closed doors and helped them over their fear. He did this by breathing the Holy Spirit into them, filling them new energy and hope, freeing them from fear and releasing them to share in his mission. "As the Father sent me, so am I sending you," he said. In the power of the Spirit they came to life and went out from their self-imposed prison, to bear witness to the risen Lord. This is the picture of the disciples that Luke gives us in today's reading from Acts. He describes a community of believers, the church, witnessing to the resurrection both in word and by the quality of their living.

We can all find ourselves in the situation of those first disciples, locked in their hiding place. Any combination of the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" can water down our commitment to following the Lord. Like

the disciples in today's gospel, we can be tempted to give up on our faith journey. The will to self-preservation can prevent us from doing what we are capable of doing with the Lord's help. The wounds we carry from earlier, failed initiatives make us hesitate to try again. Even when someone seems full of enthusiasm and hope like a Mary Magdalene, we shrug it off. We let them get on with it, while we hold back and stay safe. The gospel today suggests a way out of our self-imposed confinement. If Magdalene makes no impact on us, the Lord will find another way to enter our lives and to fill us with new life and energy for his service. No locked doors, nor even locked hearts, can keep him out. He finds a way to enter the space where we have chosen to retreat and he empowers us to resist what is holding us back. He does require some openness on our part; at the least some desire on our part to become what he is calling us to be. The risen Lord never ceases to recreate us and to renew us in his love. Easter is the season to celebrate the good news. Just as the disciples were unmoved by the hopeful enthusiasm of Mary Magdalene who had seen the Lord, so Thomas was unmoved by the witness of the disciples who told him they too had seen the Lord. Thomas, it seems, was an even harder nut to crack than the other disciples. He is one of those people who insist on certain conditions being met before he makes a move, "Unless I see, I can't believe." As he had done with the other disciples, the Lord takes Thomas on his own terms. He accommodates himself to Thomas' conditions and says, "Put your finger here." The gospel today implies that the Lord meets us wherever we are. He takes us seriously in all our fears and doubts. The Lord is prepared to stand with us on our own ground, whatever that ground is, and from there he will speak to us a word suited to our personal state of mind and heart. We don't have to get ourselves to some particular place in order for the Lord to engage with us. He takes himself to where we are, wherever it is a place of fear or of doubt. We might pray this Easter season for the openness to receive the Lord's coming into the concrete circumstances of our own lives, so that we too might say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." We might also pray that, like the Lord, we would receive others where they are, rather than where we would like them to be.

The Gift of Peace

In today's gospel we find the first disciples dispirited and terrified after the death of Jesus. They have to confront their failure to be faithful to Jesus in the hour of his passion and death. They are in a huddle, having locked themselves away in a room. Suddenly Jesus stands among them and says to them, 'Peace be with you' and breathes the Holy Spirit upon them. The risen Lord was reconciling his failed disciples to himself; they came to recognize themselves as forgiven, and, so their hearts were filled with joy. Having experienced the gift of the Lord's forgiveness, they are sent out in the power of the Spirit to offer to others the gift of forgiveness they have received. 'Those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven'. That gift and mission is given to all of us who have been baptized into the risen Jesus. Having been reconciled to the Lord we are all sent out as ministers of reconciliation. The sacrament of reconciliation is, of course, a privileged moment of reconciliation, when we receive anew the Lord's forgiveness and extend that forgiveness to those who have hurt us. However, there are other, more frequent, moments of reconciliation: the daily forgiveness of our brothers and sisters; the speaking of the hard words, 'I am sorry' and the gracious acceptance of another's offer of apology. In these moments, Jesus is standing in our midst, helping us to break out of situations that can be draining of life for everyone involved. Thomas had not been in the room when the risen Lord appeared to the other disciples. He had missed out on the Lord's bestowal of the gifts of peace and forgiveness. Thomas seems to have cut himself off from the community of the disciples. He had gone off on his own to nurse his wounds, and so he missed out on the Lord's presence in the midst of the fearful and failed disciples. He is not unlike so many today who, for a variety of reasons, have cut themselves off from the church. When we cut ourselves off from the community of believers, we lose out greatly. For all its flaws and failings, the church is the place where we encounter the risen Lord. The Lord continues to stand among the community of disciples, especially when we gather in worship and pray, when we gather to serve others in the Lord's name. It is there that we hear the Lord say, 'Peace be with you', that we experience his forgiveness for our past failures, that we hear the call to go out in his name as his witnesses, that we receive the Holy Spirit to empower us to be faithful to that mission. The community of disciples reached out to Thomas; they shared their newfound faith with him, their Easter faith, 'We have seen the Lord'. Those first disciples remind us of our calling to keep reaching out in faith to all those who, for whatever reason, have drifted away from the community of believers and no longer gather with us. If we do so, we may encounter the same negative response that the first disciples experienced from Thomas, 'I refuse to believe'. Yet, even though our efforts may fail, as the efforts of the disciples failed, we know that the Lord will keep reaching out to us when we cut ourselves off from the community of faith, just as the Lord reached out to Thomas. 'Doubt no longer', he said to him, 'but believe'. Then, out of the mouth of the sceptic came one of the greatest acts of faith in all of the gospels, 'My Lord and my God'. Thomas Merton wrote in his book *Asian Journal*, 'Faith is not the suppression of doubt. It is the overcoming of doubt, and you overcome doubt by going through it. The man of faith who has never experienced doubt is not a person of faith'. There was a great honesty about Thomas; he didn't pretend to believe when he didn't. The gospel suggests that such honesty is never very far from authentic faith.