

Thought for the week
19 April 2020
Second Sunday of Easter

“The doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, out of fear of the Jewish authorities.” Rarely can a sentence from the Gospel have resonated quite so deeply as it does today. We too are confined, some of us metaphorically speaking, others literally, to our upper room, out of fear not of the Jewish authorities, but of a virus.

The account of the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection, and the traumatised disciples’ attendant feelings of grief, loss, confusion, longing, desolation, abandonment and above all *fear*, seem to take on a deeper meaning this year.

Unlike the disciples, we have the benefit of hindsight and know that however well founded their fear, it was eventually dispelled by their encounters with their – our – risen Lord, and fear gave way to joy.

This year, the Gospel Resurrection narratives have touched me more deeply than ever. I feel I have some understanding of the cumulative effect of bad news followed by worse news, and am able to some extent, to lay aside hindsight and identify with the fear that brought the disciples together in the upper room. And yet, I know that for all the locked doors, Jesus entered the room to soothe and console, to bring peace, and to open hearts and minds to a new reality. And so it is for us: if we allow him to, Jesus will break through our closed doors to be alongside us, to comfort with the gifts of hope and peace.

I have learned during this Passiontide and Easter Week that my need of God is greater than ever. I often wonder how Thomas felt when Jesus invited him to touch his wounds, and whether he actually accepted the invitation. Like Thomas, I would like concrete proof that Jesus is risen, and I would like to be able to touch him in the Sacrament. But maybe, like Thomas, we can utter that most profound affirmation of faith: *“My Lord and my God”*, while perhaps adding *“Lord, I believe, help my unbelief”* (Mark 9:24). Can you place yourself in the scene as Thomas, and share your feelings with Jesus?

As we wonder where God is in all the mess through which we are living at the moment, let us acknowledge that God is present in the efforts of Fr Michael, Krissie, Deacon Brian and others who are doing so much to keep us together as a community in the upper room of St Michael’s. God is there too in the heroic acts of the many who risk their all for us in the upper room of their place of work. And God is to be found in the unobtrusive acts of kindness of friends, family and neighbours in the upper room of our homes. He is risen indeed – Alleluia!

Cecilia



Prayers Please

Please pray for Susanne who is expecting her first baby any day now.

Please pray for children under stress

Please pray for family and friends who work on the front line in the NHS and in the Care sector.

Please pray for the residents and staff at the two Nursing Homes in our Parish, Abbey Crest and St Luke's.

Please Pray for the repose of the souls of Ann Britton Geoffrey Gibbons, John Butler and Father David Sanders OP (Blackfriars) who have died recently.

Please also remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Joyce Ashby, Mary Lousley, Catherine Nevin, John Rixon, Ron Ryan, Geza Toth, Fr Xavier O.F.M. Fr Robert O'Neill, Jenny Pereira, Jack Leach, Mary Ann Oattes, Camilio Santana Rodrigues, Brendan McCarthy, Raymond Taylor, Maurice Bowell, Colonel Patrick Francis Gavin Barry, Harry Gardner, George Hajdu, Ilona Bakacs, Rima Dwyer, Sean Bannon and Julie Welemars and family,