

## 2nd Sunday Easter (B)

- Last year, while we struggled to exercise social distancing & isolation, there were many who used the opportunity of connecting better with the ones they lived with at home.
- I'm told that in the past, because of work commitments & various extracurricular activities, many families failed to be able to often have meals together; last year however, they sat down & ate & talked & even played board games together.
- People used opportunities by phone & other forms of social media, like Zoom to meet, connect & talk with one another.
- Many used ways of connecting socially that they don't want to lose in the future.
- On the other hand, there were also people living on their own who felt even more cut off from others & the world they have interacted with through shopping & travelling & getting together with friends & family.
- Many have suffered to various degrees of mental illness as a result of exposing underlying vulnerabilities.
- In today's Gospel we see both the experience of what it means to be connected & isolated.
- It seems that after Good Friday Thomas had cut himself off from the other apostles, and walked alone.
- That was his big mistake, but we might remember that he was in deep grief.
- People who are grieving & hurt or feel a failure or have a sense of guilt about something they've done or not done have a tendency to isolate themselves & while it's understandable it is not helpful & sometimes even destructive.
- In cutting himself off from the other apostles, Thomas made things more difficult for himself.
- However, it seems that he hadn't cut himself off completely.
- Whenever he met them, he would have noticed a difference in them.
- Their fear was largely gone, and had been replaced by joy and peace.
- It was clear that something or someone had breathed new life into them.
- They claimed that they had seen Jesus.
- But Thomas refused to take their word for it. He had to be sure.
- I can sympathise with Thomas - he was merely echoing the human cry for certainty.
- However, here on earth there is no such thing as absolute certainty about a whole lot of things, but especially spiritual realities.
- If there was certainty about spiritual realities, we wouldn't have the need for faith.

- But Thomas was being stubborn as well – he wanted to grieve & be angry on his own.
- However, he did one good thing - he rejoined the apostles.
- Now he had the support of the community.
- The great power of the community is brought home to me in the ways so often I see people strengthened by the support of community or family BUT also the opposite is true – when people cut themselves off from others & they exclude themselves from this healing & nourishing support.
- It says to me so much that **WE NEED ONE ANOTHER.**
- As a community of believers in the risen Christ, we don't travel alone, but as a community; a movement of people gathered around a dream to live by **FAITH**, to be known by the **LOVE** we extend, & be a voice of **HOPE.**
- Faith is a journey that we should be making with one another, not a solitary, privatised destination we arrive at on our own.
- It was only when he rejoined the community that Thomas encountered the risen Jesus, and so found faith again.
- To be a believer, or just a spiritual person in today's world can be a lonely business. We need support. Here is where the community comes in.
- It is only with the help of the community that we can resolve our doubts and sustain our faith.
- We live as members of a community of believers whose common faith strengthens the faith of each individual.
- We see the kind of community the first Christians enjoyed.
- They supported one another by praying and worshipping together, and by a loving service of one another; sharing of their wealth to support those in need.
- Our ministry to one another consists not so much in doing things for one another, as in travelling together, listening to each other & being open to enable Christ's healing power to work through us for the sake of each other.
- Today is also designated as Divine Mercy Sunday on which we particularly focus on the compassionate love of God extended to the broken & crucified of this world – those who need healing & being lifted up & those whose faith in the power of love needs to be made real & concrete.
- Can we experience that power in our own lives & can we then be the instrument of that power to one another & to others beyond our community?