

## 2nd Sunday Easter (A)

- As we struggle to live out our social distancing & isolation at this time, there are many who are using the opportunity of connecting better with the ones they live with at home.
- I'm told that because of work commitments & various extracurricular activities, many families failed to be able to sit down often together for meals; now however, they're sitting down & eating & talking & playing board games together.
- People are using opportunities by phone & other forms of social media to meet, connect & talk.
- Many are using ways of connecting socially that they don't want to lose after we come out the other end of our social isolation.
- On the other hand, there are also people living on their own who now feel even more cut off from others & the world they have interacted with through shopping & travelling & getting together with friends & family.
- 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 disciples, 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.
- In cutting himself off from the other disciples, 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- Their fear was largely gone, and had been replaced by joy and peace.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 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, faith would not be necessary.
- But Thomas was being stubborn as well.
- However, he did one good thing - he rejoined the disciples.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- In this time when we are bound to distance ourselves from one another for the safety of people, what are the ways in which we can we live out & deepen our faith in the God who is with us & draws us towards a new life; what are the ways we can extend love to those with whom I live, & towards those who need to know from me that I care for them; & in what ways can we be the voice of hope for positive outcomes beyond the time of this pandemic?