



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 11 APRIL 2021**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**COLLECT**

Risen Christ,  
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts,  
that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.  
Amen.

**Psalm 133**

- 1 Behold how good and pleasant it is ♦  
to dwell together in unity.
- 2 It is like the precious oil upon the head, ♦  
running down upon the beard,
- 3 Even on Aaron's beard, ♦  
running down upon the collar of his clothing.
- 4 It is like the dew of Hermon ♦  
running down upon the hills of Zion.
- 5 For there the Lord has promised his blessing: ♦  
even life for evermore.

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**Acts 4.32-35**

32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

## **John 20.19-end**

19 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." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." 24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin ), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 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." 26 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." 27 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." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 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." 30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 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.

## **Reflection – from Mary-Lou**

Our Gospel reading takes us behind locked doors, doors that were locked in fear. We've been behind locked doors too, haven't we? For us, it has been fear of the virus. Blessedly, doors are starting to be un-locked once more now, very gradually. And as we are encouraged over our doorsteps more often, very many of the most vulnerable to Coronavirus are protected by at least one dose of vaccine. This is good news! But there also remains uncertainty, the need for great caution and a lingering sense of anxiety - even fear - as the roadmap is unlocked. Fear for individuals, locked up in isolation so long they've forgotten what it feels like to be back among others. And fear for our leaders, in government and public health, about what will happen when greater unlocking really gets going.

The reading began on the evening of the third day, that same day when Mary Magdalene had run in joy to tell the others 'I have seen the Lord!' Yet despite what should have been that extraordinarily good news, those doors were still locked. Despite the fact that Peter and John have seen the empty tomb for themselves, they can't quite believe her – if there is just a glimmering of hope, it is outweighed by their fear. And that fear is holding them locked in, behind barred doors.

Twice in the reading, Jesus disrupts this notion of closed and locked doors, coming to dispel fear. Suddenly, he is with them in the room – for no door can keep out the Risen Jesus, who comes with the assurance 'Peace be with you.' When he comes to Thomas, the greeting is exactly the same.

All through St John's Easter accounts we see God's enormous gentleness with us. God knows, God understands, and God is not interested in guilt, except to tend it and help broken people begin again. Jesus brings to us, as to those first frightened disciples, his message of Peace,

and not one word of condemnation. They, and we, begin again in the new life of Christ. Those frightened disciples in the locked room in Jerusalem become Apostles, sent out into the world bearing the Holy Spirit breathed into them, and they become channels of that holy presence in and for all of creation.

It's always been a temptation for the church to stay behind the door with it closed, if not locked – to stay where we may rest safe and content, sharing the peace of Christ in a personal but cosy, private way. Like the first disciples, in the new life of the Risen Jesus, we too are strengthened to go through the door into a world that needs God's healing and peace so desperately. Ever so gently, Christ coaxes his disciples today out into a space where we can become apostles on both sides of the door! Transformed by his peace, filled with the grace and joy this brings us, we too begin again. Praise the Lord!