

**Reflection for  
Second Sunday of  
Easter**



'It has been an Easter like no other...' is a comment I have heard frequently over the past week. It certainly has. Normally a time when we would be visiting families, most of us stayed behind closed doors. Anyone tempted to make the most of the bank holiday weekend by heading to the country, the mountains or the sea was duly warned that, like the Irish Grand National, it was a non-runner! For people of faith, who would be used to gathering for the ceremonies of Holy Week, drawn in by the drama and the different moods of the various liturgies, there was no gathering. People could follow the ceremonies online or on TV, but we missed seeing and being with one another and enjoying the sense of shared celebration. There is a quietness about Easter this year, itself perhaps a reflection of the national mood. But perhaps our experience is not that far removed from the first Easter. Resurrection faith is not a fanfare but a slow dawning in the midst of darkness and fear. It is cocooned together in a room with the doors firmly closed to outsiders that the disciples encounter the risen Christ. The death of Christ has completely upended their world. Unsure of how to move forward, they sit there almost paralysed. For the disciples, as

for us, awareness of the presence with them of the risen Christ gradually breaks through the doors of bewilderment, uncertainty, loneliness and fear. It breaks through in the gentleness in people's conversation, the concern for the neighbour, the 'little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love', the resilience and creativity of children, the thoughtful prayer for those who are sick and those looking after them, the quiet acceptance of bereaved families when only ten family members are allowed attend the funeral of their deceased loved one, the willing compliance with lockdown restrictions for the sake of a greater good, a new appreciation for what really matters. 'Peace be with you' is Christ's Easter gift to the disciples. May we receive it in our hearts and share it with one another.

*Draw us forth, God of all creation.  
Draw us forward and away from  
limited certainty into the immense  
world of your love.  
Give us the capacity to even for a  
moment taste the richness of the feast  
you give us.  
Give us the peace to live with  
uncertainty, with questions, with  
doubts.  
Help us to experience the resurrection  
anew with open wonder  
and an increasing ability to see you in  
the people of Easter. Amen*

Fr. Richard Sheehy

**Memorare**

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer. Amen.

Items for the Parish Link can be e-mailed to [parishlink@gmail.com](mailto:parishlink@gmail.com) or dropped into the Parish Office letter-box, marked 'Parish Link', by 5pm on the Thursday of week of publication. A contact name and phone number is required for each item.  
**Parish Office Opening Times: Monday to Friday 9.30am. - 12.30pm.**  
**Ph: 8308257 or email [saintcolumba@eircom.net](mailto:saintcolumba@eircom.net)**

**PARISH LINK**



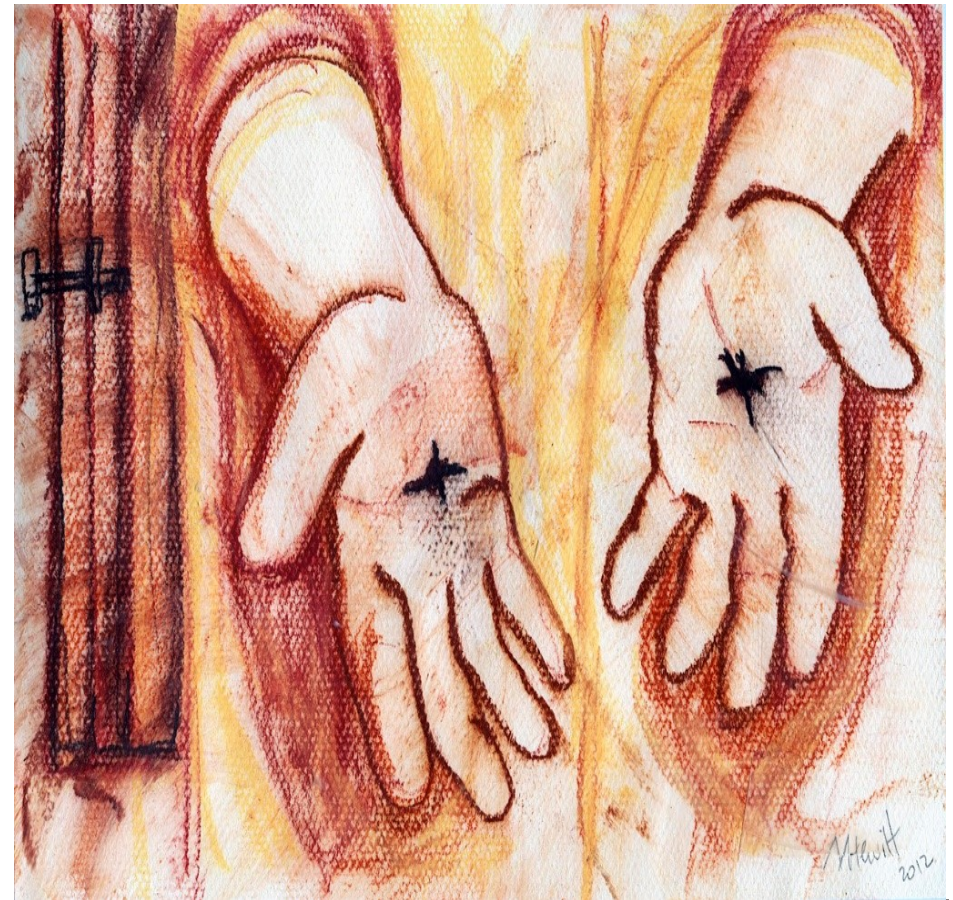
Issue No 27/16

Parish of St. Columba

19 April 2020

Second Sunday of Easter

**Blessed are Those who have not seen  
and yet believed**



**Mission Statement** *St. Columba's parish is a vibrant and welcoming community of faith, continuing to give practical witness to the Good News of Christ, through worship and reflection, and through Christian service to the community.*

**The following is sent from our Former Parish Priest Fr. Jim Caffrey now a monk in Mepkin Abbey in the USA.**

***Loneliness in a Time of Social Isolation By Father Columba***

When I lived and ministered in Dublin, we had a group of over 20 young people. We prayed and visited elderly friends in their homes and their nursing homes. One of my great friends was Gertrude, who was an eccentric 90-year-old German lady. Peter, one of the community, and I visited her weekly. Often on the weekends, we brought her out to the National Concert Hall or other places where she liked to go. Often Gertrude told us "I love you visiting me. It takes away the damned loneliness". Over the last few days I have thought a lot about Gertrude and our other elderly friends in Dublin. How difficult and lonely these times are for those who are already lonely and isolated. The elderly, yes, but also many others of all ages who live alone. So I want to make a simple suggestion. Make a list of all the people you know who live alone and decide to make contact with them regularly. Let them know that you're thinking about them and that they are not alone. You can do this by writing a letter, sending an email, or a text. Better still, phone them and talk to them. Use the phone, Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, Google Hangouts, or whatever.

What if you are feeling lonely and isolated yourself? Here are some tips you might find helpful:

- Think of helping someone else by making contact by phone or email
- Make a schedule or a plan for each day. Write it out and try to stick to it.
- Try to take some exercise if you're able. Getting outdoors, even for a short while, is helpful.
- Another way to enjoy the outdoors in your garden is to do some gardening. Plant some flowers, vegetables or herbs.
- Set up birdfeeders outside your window so that you can enjoy seeing the birds and other wildlife in your neighbourhood.
- On the Mepkin Abbey website we have many suggestions about how you can join others in prayer or pray by yourself. Watch Mass on line. You can say the Divine Office, the Rosary, or you can practice Lectio Divina.
- Sign up for an online course.
- Do something creative. Maybe you can write short stories or poetry, paint, create a family photo album, or search online for a new hobby.
- Do some home improvements. Take it one room at a time to clean and tidy maybe even paint or redecorate.
- Lift the spirits of others by passing around some of the funny cartoons or memes online. Even in a time of crisis, a sense of humour shared with others can be a blessing.
- Perhaps you have CD's you haven't listened to in a while. Dust them off, and enjoy them.
- Finally, if you feel worried about your mental health during this time, reach out for help. There are crisis lines available to help.

**ALONE COVID-19 Helpline** have a national support line for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ireland. Professional staff will be available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line will be open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling 0818 222 024, and hours may be extended to meet the demand.

**Podcast: Catechism with Fr Neill**

Dear friends, We hope you had a peaceful and joyful Easter break and that you and your loved ones continue to be safe and in good health.

As the lockdown and social distancing measures remain in place and many of us are self-isolating or cocooning, you may be interested to be reminded of Fr. Neil Xavier O'Donoghue's podcast, "Catechism with Fr. Neil"

Fr. Neil is a Lecturer in Systematic Theology here at **St. Patrick's College, Maynooth** Each day, Fr. Neil posts a short (5-10 minute) audio podcast for the 366 days of 2020. In each episode he reads a few paragraphs of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and gives a short reflection on the passage. In this way you can listen to the whole book over the course of a year, starting at any time that suits you.

The Catechism is a great summary of the Catholic Faith that Pope St. John Paul II called a "sure reference for the teaching of Catholic Doctrine."

The Catechism with Fr. Neil Podcast is available on SoundCloud and Spotify and also in the Apple podcast store. Details can be found on Fr. Neil's webpage: [www.fatherneil.com](http://www.fatherneil.com) The feed for the podcast is also available at: <http://feeds.soundcloud.com/users/soundcloud:users:747004546/sounds.rss>

**Support Services for Older and Vulnerable People**

COVID-19 community supports are now in place to ensure vulnerable members of the community are reached and helped at this time.

These comprise the local authority, Health Service Executive, County Champions, An Post, Community Welfare Service, An Garda Síochána, other State organisations, charities and other stakeholders.

These Dedicated helplines are focused specifically on ensuring that the cocooning elderly, vulnerable members of the community or those living alone can access deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels.

Please try to ensure any vulnerable or elderly people in your parish help are aware of these services.

**Dublin City Council  
Helpline 01-2228555  
Email -[covidsupport@dublincity.ie](mailto:covidsupport@dublincity.ie)**

**GET THE DIGITAL EDITION OF THE MESSENGER FOR FREE**

A combination of 'cocooning' and the travel restrictions currently in place all around the country mean that many readers of The Sacred Heart Messenger cannot access their monthly 'little red book'. Therefore, during this coronavirus crisis we are delighted to make the digital edition of The Messenger available FREE OF CHARGE until we return to normal delivery. Please send your email request to: [c.henry@messenger.ie](mailto:c.henry@messenger.ie) and we will send you a link to view the Messenger on your laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

**Sanctuary, Stanhope Street,  
Free Online Meditation Sessions**

We are hosting free online meditation sessions via Zoom three times per week. All are welcome! Monday Morning from

10:00am-10.30am

Wednesday Evening from 7:30pm-8:00pm

Thursday afternoon from 1.15pm-1.45pm

Contact: [www.sanctuary.ie](http://www.sanctuary.ie)

**Prayer for our protection**

We ask for prayers for those affected by the Coronavirus. Placing all our trust in the Lord, and asking Our Lady to intercede for us.