



St Peter's Catholic Church

London Road, Gloucester GL1 3EX

Tel: 01452 523603

Parish website: www.stpetersgloucester.org.uk

Diocesan website: www.cliftondiocese.com

CLIFTON DIOCESE (a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in England and Wales under number 10462076.
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Parish Priest:

Monsignor Liam Slattery VG

liam.slattery@cliftondiocese.com

Permanent Deacons:

Rev Colm Robinson

colm.robinson@cliftondiocese.com

Rev Tim Meadows

timothy.meadows@cliftondiocese.com

Rev David Hebbes

david.hebbes@cliftondiocese.com

Parish Secretary:

Mrs Thérèse English

gloucester.stpeter@cliftondiocese.com

Parish Office:

Tues, Wed, Fri -9.30am-2.30pm

Thurs-12.00pm-5.00pm

Parish Safeguarding Representatives:

Jim Harris & John Bond

Schools

St Peter's Catholic Primary School:

Tel: 01452 524792. Web: www.st-peters-pri.gloucs.sch.uk

St Peter's Catholic High School & Sixth Form Centre

Tel: 01452 520594. Web: www.st-petershigh.gloucs.sch.uk

19th April 2020 – Second Sunday of Easter (Year A)

Divine Mercy Sunday

Mass Intentions this Week

During this week Fr Liam will say a daily private mass in St Peter's Church for the following intentions:

Sunday: People of the Parish.

Monday: Intentions of Ian and Emily.

Tuesday: Paddy, Jane and John Conway *RIP*.

Wednesday: John Cronin *RIP*

Thursday: Brendan McGowan *RIP*.

Friday: Katherine Archibald (McHale) *RIP*

Saturday: Maureen Collier *RIP*

Church Closure

St Peter's Church and the Parish Office are closed until further notice.

This Week

Second Week of Easter. Thursday is the Solemnity of St George. Friday is the Feast of St Mark

Diocesan Prayer Link: St Margaret Mary Coleford, Our Lady of Victories Cinderford & Our Lady of Lourdes Newent

RIP

We ask your prayers for those who have died recently:

Vincent Perez.

Private cremation or graveside funeral services will take place in due course. Memorial Mass will be celebrated once the current restrictions have been lifted. We extend our sympathy to family and friends and we keep them in our prayer.

Donate

Those wanting to make a secure online donation to parish funds can now do so through the parish website.

Daily Live Streaming of Mass from Clifton Cathedral

Continues each day including Sundays at 9.30am and can be accessed through the diocesan website (cliftondiocese.com) or through churchservices.tv.

Pope's Prayer Intention for April

That those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied

We remember those who have asked for our prayers: Ian Cahill, Andrea Brushneen, Cheryl Loy, Sharon Williams, Michael Hercules, Mary Wood, Leonard Slatter, Sue Hartnett, Phil Gammond, Mandi Stokes, Theo Montague, Margaret Coleman, Vera Watson, Patricia Walsh, Cecilia Edwards, Veronica Burke, Janet Diaco, Linda Northway, Rebecca Northway, Ben Wilkinson, Jackie Hutt, Steve Prosser, Kitty Daly, Peter Hagan, Frank Kelly, Mary Philomena Mayo, Marie O'Connor, Baby Monroe Cserna-Ochai, Jennifer Morrissey, Kathleen Neely, Joan O'Connell, Milvia Sepede, Eileen Mary Parsons, Pat O'Ryan, Fr Liam Slattery, Christopher Browne.

Year of Communion - Sunday April 19th – Second Sunday of Easter

Thomas doubts the good news of the resurrection, but upon seeing Jesus physically, believes. But what about us and all those who either struggle to believe or refuse to believe that Jesus rose from the dead? In the Western world, where society is highly sceptical and often aggressively atheistic it requires a great deal of confidence and assurance to stay faithful to the teaching of the Gospel. It can be particularly difficult to remain faithful in the face of our current adversity and struggle. Where is the hope in the face of COVID-19, the hope that the death and resurrection of Jesus is meant to give us? The disciples were 'united, heart and soul' and they held 'everything in common'. In other words, they knew the need to stand together, to support one another. Now, more than ever, we need to stand together, to support those who need our support, to reach out to those who are vulnerable, to those who are afraid and to those who grieve. Faith is not an individual activity. It is something which comes from living and supporting and loving one another and that includes those who have no faith.

A homily for the Second Sunday of Easter from Deacon Colm Robinson

The encounter with Thomas paints, in a dramatic fashion, the journey of many people from a position of total disbelief to one of absolute faith.

Having doubts in our search for truth is nothing to be ashamed of and can actually turn out to be a growing point in the life of faith.

Thomas was doubtful about the key issues of whether Jesus had risen from the dead and was, in fact, alive. Therein lies the heart of our whole believing. Thomas with his intelligent questioning and his need for satisfactory answers is a good type of person to have in any community, and acts as a defence against the excesses of pious belief.

In many ways he echoes moments of our own uncertainty when we question the religious values handed down to us. During life and perhaps especially now during this time of coronavirus, our minds are darkened, and our vision of God is blurred by doubts.

There is nothing comfortable about believing as it challenges us to change our lives as a result of our encounter with Jesus. The risen Christ is present in our midst today, as much as he was with the early Christians and we are called to live our lives in his name. It is through believing, that we, enter into a relationship with Christ and enjoy the new life which he offers us. Faith is our meeting with God and there will be moments in life when all else fails and we have nothing to fall back on except faith.

All of us struggle at times – we seek answers for questions, explanations for why things happen and sometimes the inability to fully accept what someone else tells us to be true.

The Thomas in our Gospel was a down to earth plain-spoken man who had been the only one of the disciples who went along with Jesus' decision to return to Bethany when his friend Lazarus had died. Thomas insisted that despite the hostility Jesus had received in Bethany, that all of them should go with him even if it meant risking their own lives. Thomas was also the one who asked Jesus to speak plainly because what he was saying was baffling him. He was honest enough to say out loud – Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?

Thomas like the others had witnessed all that had happened to Jesus – he had felt the fear, doubt and depression in the wake of the crucifixion and burial. When confronted with the assertion that Jesus had risen and appeared to his companions, he did what most intelligent people would do, he asked them if they had let their imaginations run wild. Maybe he concluded that out of desperate hope, the other disciples had become delusional. He was not going to let himself to be drawn in that direction. So, he was being totally honest and open as he always had been, stating his refusal to accept what they had said without some sort of evidence. Perhaps in his insistence for hard evidence, he had alienated himself from his friends, and was cut off from the group he thought he belonged to.

A week after Thomas's demand for convincing evidence Jesus reappeared to the whole group. His first words clearly showed that he had neither isolated nor rejected Thomas. He simply invited him to set aside his doubts and believe.

By making allowance for Thomas's scepticism, the risen Jesus made it clear that he is open and ready to meet all of us wherever we happen to find ourselves. The irony of the encounter between Jesus and Thomas is that from the mouth of the man who had been labelled as 'doubting Thomas' came one of the greatest expressions of faith 'my Lord and my God'.

Thomas wanted assurance and evidence. He also wanted Jesus and needed personal connection to overcome his doubts. Others may be able to inspire us and encourage us, they cannot give us their faith. The journey to faith in God and Jesus is ultimately personal and sometimes lonely. In today's Gospel we come to see that Mary could not experience the resurrected Jesus for the disciples, and the disciples couldn't experience Jesus for Thomas. Eventually we come to understand that it's faith, shaken at times by doubt, that keeps us on the path of searching for our own experience of Jesus. And we need the support of others to help us along that path.

John's Gospel today spells out that to be a disciple involves faith **and** love. This can be the journey of a lifetime and we will never achieve them perfectly. But God meets us, where we are, in our honest doubts – by remaining open to this our doubt can be a gateway to deeper faith.

