

THE PARISHES OF ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST AND ST MARY MAGDALENE

35 Brighton Place, Edinburgh EH15 1LL

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Parish Priest: Fr. Jock Dalrymple:

0131 669 5447

Deacon – Revd Eddie White:

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Pastoral Team: Alice Codling, Jennifer Morris and Chris Vinestock

Shared Parish House: 3 Sandford Gardens, EH15 1LP

Administrator: Enrico Fertini

(Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10am to 3pm & Friday 11am-4pm)

Web address: www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk

Web address: www.stmarymagdalenes.co.uk

Joint Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/StJohnsandStMaryMagdalenes>

Joint e-mail address for our sister parishes: stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com

Third Sunday of Easter – 18 April 2021



“Have You
Anything Here
to Eat?”

But Jesus said: “Why are you so agitated, and why are these doubts rising in your hearts? Look at my hands and feet; yes, it is I indeed. Touch me and see yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have” And as he said this he showed them his hands and feet.

(Luke 24:38-41)

A Warm Welcome to Sophia and Emily Lioia who will be received into the Catholic Church at the 9.30am Mass at St John’s.

With this newsletter there is a Pastoral Letter from the Bishops of Scotland for the forthcoming Scottish Parliament Election on 6 May.

Communion for the Housebound

As the Covid situation eases slightly and more of us have been vaccinated, and in response to requests from some of our housebound parishioners keen to receive the Sacrament, a few Eucharistic visits have resumed. These are carried out, of course, under strict guidelines - sanitising, face masks and social distancing maintained as far as is possible. If anyone else wishes to resume - and it is very much the case that both the housebound parishioner and the Eucharistic Minister should be happy to do so - please contact Fr Jock or Jim Roarty/Una Gallagher.

Two Family Masses on the first Weekend of May

Arlene Lauder writes: ‘At the beginning of May we will be welcoming our young parishioners back to one of two family bubble masses...

At St John’s church on **Saturday 1 May at 6:30 pm**

...and at St Mary Magdalene’s church on **Sunday 2 May at 11:15 am.**

To book your place please contact Arlene Lauder by text on 07950 880 833 or by email at lauder.82@btinternet.com. Available places will be on a first come first served basis but with plenty of spaces to fill we look forward to seeing as many families as possible.’

NB There will be an additional Mass celebrated that weekend at 4.30pm on Sunday at St John’s.

Welcome to a new Fabric Committee at St Mary Magdalene’s – co-ordinated by Deacon Eddie, supported by Piotr Rekowski ...and a Request for Volunteers (from either parish)

Deacon Eddie writes: ‘As we emerge from church closures and, hopefully, will soon see our church buildings used more regularly, and ready to be filled with people, with worship and laughter, we will need to ensure the buildings continue to remain in good condition. In recent weeks, at St Mary Magdalene’s, we have had the emergency systems reviewed, the batteries in alarms renewed, the fire extinguishers tested, new emergency lighting ordered, and wiring for better livestream sound planned and soon to be tested.

St Mary Magdalene’s reminds me of my childhood parish in Dundee, particularly the charming way the changing sunlight through the day affects the mood of the light in the building. We would like to ensure that we protect this building the best we can and so are looking for some volunteers willing to help.

One issue I personally have is that usually, during the day, I am committed to being in school so meeting trades people is not always possible. Maybe you can help in that area if your work/retirement permits you some time and flexibility during office hours? Or you have trade skills which would be helpful too? We also have a list of tasks identified as needing done as a result of the Archdiocesan structural survey. Perhaps you wouldn’t mind occasionally climbing a ladder and changing a battery or two? (The most recent bleeping alarm battery was changed by the deacon in his alb, up a ladder, two minutes before Easter Sunday Mass...!)

If anyone is willing to join the building and fabric team - to help in any way you can - we would be delighted to hear from you – please make contact either by email - ewhite@outlook.com - or by mobile 07986015772.’

St John’s Church Portobello Easter Treasure Trail

During Eastertide, searching for the young at heart!

Pat Whyte and Lynda Kazimoglu write: ‘Have you challenged yourself to our treasure trail yet? An excellent adventure for all ages, this easy loop of Portobello will have you spotting parts of our beautiful community you hadn’t noticed before. Why not include it in your daily exercise while we are still living under some restrictions. We are looking forward to warmer weather and lighter hearts, let’s all get into the swing of things. Take in the beauty of our lovely surroundings, the Promenade, the High Street, the history. Grab a hot/cold drink at one of the many fine cafes, or have a picnic on the beach, sit on the wall, watch the world go by. Go on, give it a go - you know you want to!

The entry form was attached to last weeks’ newsletter, but it is still available by clicking the [link](#) – and hard copies can be obtained from the Parish House) and send some of photographs of your adventure.... There is still time to enter as the deadline has been extended to 30 April 2021 ...’

MASS BOOKING



To help us to manage the numbers, if you wish to come to one of the 'live' Saturday and Sunday Masses, please contact the parish house **by phone (0131 669 5618 – a special number) only on Wednesday 10am to 1pm - Thursday 10am to 1pm -Friday 11am to 1pm** or by email (stjohnsandstmarymagdalenes@gmail.com) **until Friday 1pm**. After every Mass in one of our Churches, 'deep cleaning' has to take place – something that takes a considerable length of time and effort. We are so incredibly grateful to our welcomers, stewards and cleaners who are making it possible for us to have our churches open – **and always open to new volunteers.**) Please also be aware that you will need to utilize hand sanitisers as you come into and leave the church, and masks must be worn throughout the service.

Due to the COVID regulations we have limited seatings available and therefore **we advise early booking.**

THIS WEEK

Saturday 17 April – Vigil Mass - 6.30pm – St John's – fully booked

Sunday 18 April

9.30am – St John's – **Mass – fully booked** (livestreamed)

11am – Prayer Room - Mass (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene's – Mass – **fully booked**

Monday 19 April

10.00am – St John's – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

7-8.15pm – **Zoom Meeting – Gospel Sharing and Reflection – Open to All** - to join in over Zoom, go to <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83216963393?pwd=OWpTaWVGa0xONk11UFJJUmJPb2ltQT09>

Tuesday 20 April - 7.00pm – Prayer Room – Mass (livestreamed)

Wednesday 21 April - 10.00am – St John's – Mass (livestreamed, no booking required)

Thursday 22 April

10.00am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

6.30pm – **Fundraising Group Meeting**

6.45pm – Zoom – **First Communion Parish Children**

Friday 23 April

10.00am - St John's – **Mass** (livestreamed, no booking required)

11am - **Rosary Group** – 'Anyone can join, especially if you have Facebook Messenger, but also on WhatsApp, or just on the phone. Sometimes it takes time for us all to join in, but we always manage. Please join us.

Message Maria Igoe on 07981333219 or mariaigoe@yahoo.co.uk'

Saturday 24 April - 6.30pm – St John's – Vigil Mass (booking required)

Sunday 25 April

9.30pm – St John's – **Mass** (livestreamed) (**booking required**)

11am – Prayer Room – Mass (pre-recorded, streamed)

11.15am – St Mary Magdalene's – **Mass (booking required)**

From Archbishop Leo's Weekly Ad Clerum

The 50-capacity restriction on places of worship in Scotland is being changed from Monday 26 April.

Capacity will be determined by the size of your church, with the continued requirement of 2 metre physical distancing. Registering the attendees at each Mass and the other mitigations of face coverings, hand sanitiser and one-way systems etc. will still be necessary. It means bigger churches will be able to welcome more people to Mass, which is very good news. Places of worship will be expected to undertake a building assessment to determine capacity. The Scottish Government is developing new guidance on this and I will update you with it when details are issued.

Weddings/Funerals - From 26 April the maximum capacity at both weddings and funerals will rise to 50 (it is currently 5 for weddings and 20 for funerals).

Grace: The Church's Hidden Treasure (Zoom) - Easter is a season of grace, so register now for a six week course titled Grace: The Church's Hidden Treasure. It is hosted by the Archdiocese and takes place on Mondays at 7:30pm, starting **19 April**. Sessions will focus on grace according to the teaching of Saint Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*. It will include an introduction on how to read the Summa, its structure, and how to go through one of Saint Thomas' articles. The webinar course is organised by the Catechetical Commission of the Archdiocese and led by Father Kevin Douglas (St Peter's & St Columba's, Edinburgh) and Sister Anna Marie McGuan RSM. Register now at bit.ly/GraceCourse2021 Sessions will be recorded.

Practical responses to Laudato si' (Zoom) - Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato si' calls us to hear and respond to the cry of the earth and the poor. In this event, participants can share experience in making practical responses, such as in daily choices and through creative ideas like community gardens. It takes place 10:00-11:30am on Zoom on **Saturday 24 April**. To register: tinyurl.com/LSiResponses This event is organised by the Caritas, Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese.

Exterminating Poverty or the Poor? A Scottish Doctor's Story (Zoom) - Mark H Sutherland & Neil Sutherland, authors of 'Exterminating Poverty', will tell the true story of how a Scottish doctor took on Marie Stopes 100 years ago, and why this matters today. This webinar will inform and inspire those who take up the pro-life fight today. It takes place at 7:45pm on **Monday 26 April**. Register now on Eventbrite bit.ly/ExterminatingPovertyOrThePoor

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ON THURSDAY 22 APRIL – TO MARK 175 YEARS OF NEW COLLEGE – A Special (Virtual) GUEST LECTURE from the former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese between 17.00 and 18.45

'Children, religion, and the earth they will inherit', followed by Q and A.

(Register on the Edinburgh University School of Divinity Website)

A message from the J&P Group - The next Mary's Meals Family Hour takes place at 7pm this Thursday, 22 April on their YouTube channel:

'We have a whole host of wonderful speakers lined up, including:

Our communications manager for Malawi – Naomi Malunga – who will explain how we are currently reaching more than a million children in Malawi despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Emma Hutton – our head of grassroots engagement – who will share stories from our amazing volunteers and supporters. As well as our executive director – Daniel Adams – who will keep you informed and entertained with all the latest news from Mary's Meals. Tune in for an hour of inspiration and step into spring with your Mary's Meals family!

NOTICEBOARD

Safeguarding Training Courses

Peter Gillam and Alison Connelly write: 'For those parish volunteers who have PVG and have attended personally a part one induction training course, there is now online training available via Zoom for the **part two induction courses**. Attendance at such a course is essential to ensure continuous approval for working with children and vulnerable adults. Please try and avail yourself of this opportunity.' More info can be found by clicking here: <https://www.stjohnsportobello.co.uk/safeguarding>

Supporting Mary's Meals, STEKA Children's Home and the St John's Tower Fund all at the Same Time.

'Twenty sponsors (3 dresses for £10) = £200 is all we require to meet our target of £900.00 for the Tower Appeal. You can make payment to the specially-set up bank account (sort code 608371, acc. no. 02772692) or you may hand your envelope to the Parish House (please write "Dresses" on it).'

Last Wednesday saw the beginning of Ramadan, the Moslem Holy Month of Fasting from Sunrise to Sunset

...the following day Imam Hassan Rabbani emailed the following reflection:

'Dear Friends,

I would like to extend my greetings of the Holy month of Ramadan.

As many sent their Ramadan greetings before the start of this month. I thought I'd share this message after my first fast. I closed fast today at 3.50 am and opened the fast at 8.28 pm. I have to admit I did struggle. I did practise fasting when my family were away however it seems that practise was in vain. I either blame them or the fact that I didn't drink a lot of water. To be on the safe side I'd probably say the latter :)

On a serious note, this is perhaps the holiest month for Muslims. We endure the pangs of hunger so we can empathise with the marginalised. We are encouraged to give lots away in charity. We spend the nights in worship and the days in reciting scripture. The Iftaar meal has always been an important meal since we break bread with others. I fondly remember my Interfaith Iftaar meals with people from different faiths.

I pray you and your loved ones are safe.

*Sallam,
Hassan Rabbani.'*

Let's seek to pray for our Moslem sisters and brothers during the coming month.....

A Reflection by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (recorded in Donald Nicholl's - Triumph of the Spirit in Russia)

'In '41 Mama took me back to Moscow. There I saw our enemies for the first time. If my memory is right, nearly 20,000 German war prisoners were to be marched in a single column through the streets of Moscow. The pavements swarmed with onlookers, cordoned off by soldiers and police.

The crowd was mostly women – Russian women with hands roughened by hard work, lips untouched by lipstick, and thin hunched shoulders which had borne half the burden of a war.

Every one of them must have a father or a husband, a brother or a son killed by the Germans. They gazed with hatred in the direction from which the column was to appear. At last we saw it.

The generals marched at the head, massive chins stuck out, lips folded disdainfully, their whole demeanour meant to show superiority over their plebeian victors.

'They smell of eau de Cologne, the bastards', someone in the crowd said with hatred. The women were clenching their fists. The soldiers and policemen had all they could do to hold them back. All at once something happened to them. They saw German soldiers, thin, unshaven, wearing dirty blood-stained bandages, hobbling on crutches or leaning on the shoulder of their comrades: the soldiers walked with their heads down. The street became silent – the only sound was the shuffling of boots and the thumping of crutches.

Then I saw an elderly woman in broken-down boots push herself forward and touch a policeman's shoulder, saying, 'Let me through'. There must have been something about her that made him step aside. She went up to the column, took from inside her coat something wrapped in a coloured handkerchief and unfolded it. It was a crust of black bread. She pushed it awkwardly into the pocket of a soldier, so exhausted that he was tottering on his feet. And then suddenly from every side women were running towards the soldiers, pushing into their hands bread, cigarettes, whatever they had. The soldiers were no longer enemies. They were people.'

A Note from Justice and Peace Group about FRESH START

Jim Roarty writes: 'Fresh Start are accepting Starter Pack donations again. So, if you would like to help a homeless person getting a home for the first time and also clear out your cupboards, here is the checklist of what Fresh Start can use:

Dishes & Cutlery: Dinner plates, side plates, bowls, cutlery, glass tumblers, mugs, tea towels.

Cleaning Items: Washing-up liquid, toilet cleaner, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand soap, toilet rolls, bin bags & liners, dustpans & brushes, all-purpose cleaners, laundry tablets, J-cloths.

Pots & Pans: Soup pots, frying pans, milk pans, cooking utensils, can openers, potato peelers, wooden spoons.

Bed Linen & Towels: Single, double & king sheets, duvet covers, blankets, pillow cases, towels, curtains, face cloths.

Small Household Electric Items: Kettles, toasters, lamps, irons, vacuum cleaners, radios, DVD players, microwaves, music systems.

Long Lasting Food Products: Tins & jars of beans/spaghetti/soup/vegetables/meat/fish/cooking sauces; packets of pasta, rice, cereal, porridge, biscuits, sugar, tea bags, instant coffee, UHT milk.

Donations should be left at the back of the church or alternatively, contact me (jimroarty4@gmail.com; tel 0131 669 0896) to arrange a collection.'

(Please note: all items should be in a clean, re-usable condition as Fresh Start don't have the facilities to wash them and are charged for disposal of items they can't use)

VACANCIES FOR LIVE OUT ASSISTANTS WITH L'ARCHE, EDINBURGH

'We have some vacancies for Live Out Assistants across our community. We are open to all applicants: part time, full time or relief. If you know someone who might be interested or would enjoy being part of our community please pass on the below details or send them to our website for more details on how to apply:

[Vacancies | L'Arche-Edinburgh \(larche-edinburgh.org.uk\)](http://larche-edinburgh.org.uk)

SCIAF news

From the SCIAF bulletin: 'We are so happy that parishes have re-opened... We know this has brought joy to Catholics across Scotland. We have lots to share with you this month! There are many activities that you and your parishioners can take part in that will help communities living in poverty across the world. Just click [here](#) for the latest news.'

Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline (24 hours)

 0800 027 1234

PARISH REGISTER

Please pray for those who have died recently: Bridie Hanlon, Kitty Laird, Alan Greig and Bill Laidlaw

Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Fr Tom Hennessey, Pat McInally, Margaret Watret, Ina McNama, William Sellar, Bartholomew and Helen Dignan, Mary Quigley, Nancy Dalrymple and Bill Cheyne

St John's: Janet Clark (1999); **Apr.17:-** Agnes Adamson (1990); John Rae Sen. (1976); Julia Lacey (1941); **Apr.18:-** Robert Hazlett (1998); **Apr.19:-** Johnny McCahill (2014); May Docherty (1988); Derrick Thomson; **Apr.20:-** Elizabeth Holligan (2000); Betty Ferguson (1998); Elizabeth Gaynor; **Apr.21:-** Alice Mitchell (1995); **Apr.22:-** Ina McNama (2017); Mary Quigley (2014); Helen Dignan (1998); Kathleen Dykes Main (1991); **Apr.23:-** James McMillan (2010); Margaret Gilhooley (2005); Charles McLaughlan (1972); Frank Irvine.

St Mary Magdalene's: **Apr.20:-** James Marlow (1994); **Apr.21:-** Bill Cheyne (2020); April 24 – Fr Tom Hennesy

Sick Parishioners - St. John's: Isa McAfferty, Mike Iannarelli, May Thomson, Joyce Martin, Norah Bruce, Patricia Lawler, James Curnyn, Celia Stone, Eddie Clark, Margaret MacLeod, Sheena Sivell, Isa McCafferty, Catherine Walker, Andrew Farmer, Joyce Martin, Ruth Viso, Mary Grady, Susan Cammach, Pauli Walker, Dolores Jones, Evelyn Oldershaw, Anna Butler, May Flynn, Vincent Knowles, John Cregan, young Saoirse Golden, John Whyte, Chloe Sutherland, Frances Cunningham, David Reid, Frank Logan, Charlotte McGregor, Betty Dougal, Anne Thomson, Eileen Brown, Mike Noonan, Sarah McManus, Mike Burns, Sr Jennifer Lindsay, Ernie Moran, Maureen Low, Pat Hunter, Alan Blyth, Mary Slight, Mary Phair, Rose Thornton, Kitty Dykes, Norman Telfer, Philip Jamieson, Alf MacNamara, Maureen Lawrie, Kathie Gallagher, Erin Corbett, Roz Byers, Marie Angela Crolla and Lorraine Syme.

Sick Parishioners - St. Mary Magdalene's: Mgr Tony Duffy, Graham Neilson, Sheila and George Service, Chris English, Jacqueline Marinello, Ray Donnelly, Sam Burns, Clive Davis, Ella Ayers, Isobel Phillips, Denis Davidson, Margaret Duffy, Maria Scott Jnr, Louise Gorman, Ann Dockrell, John Prior, John Newell, Michael McPhillips, Bridget Malone, Charles Malcolm, Margaret Ryan, Jacqueline Hannan, Julie Keegan, Rose McKay, Laurie Wallace, Annie Watson, David O'Donnell, Andrew Banks, Jude Ferguson, and Mary & James Muir.

Please pray for sick friends and relatives of parishioners, including: William Young, Nick Koning, Henry Horn, Ann Thorp, John Mackenzie, Alistair Grieves, Tonino Howard, Jimmy McBride, baby Josh Simpson, Maureen McEvoy, Helen McCann, Rhoda Tumboli, Dani Miniette, Marina and Maria Calanna, Alec Hamill, Peter Millar, Annabelle Cervantes, Nan Doig, Rachel Kennedy, Leo Stone, Dago Dinis, baby Baxter Sweeney, Sr May Lewis, Joan Murray Hamilton, Sr Margaret Mary, Billy McPhillips, Jean Nelson, Margaret Anne Marton, Betty Blyth, Lauren Fitzpatrick, Fr Christy Fox, Joe Greenan, Michael Igoe, Katie McAnenny, Robert Shaw, baby Kinsley McMillan, John Walsh, Moira McConville, Kathleen Kay, Margaret and Victoria Roddam, John Williams, Clare Richardson, Karen MacKay, Laura Anderson, Gloria Crolla, Richard Reid, James O'Rourke, Tommy Muir, Janice Todd, Lauli Ridge, Seval Kazimoglu, Anne Young, James Shepherd, Carla Zanetti, Peter Hanley, Jennifer Kay, Janie Low, Ranier Carpo, Marie Baird, Andrew Franklin, Frank Palmer, Paul Henderson, Ellen Green, Andrew Preston, Jamie Mitchell, Eunice Macdonald, Peter Bromley, Audrey Burgess, Kathleen Cawley, Margo Law, Misia Jack, Hannah Muldoon, Emma Bromet, Edward Caulfield, Igor Rekowski, Diana Hibbert, Joan Brooks, Mary Turnbull, Stuart Falconer, and young Ray Donovan Syme

St Mary Magdalene	St John the Evangelist
£374.00 total including Offertory of £127.00 and Gift Aid of £247.00	£4,014.09 total including Offertory of £354.29, Gift Aid of £2,849.80, Easter Special Collection of £190.00 and £620.00 Online Donations

Thank You

Warm birthday greetings to Sheila Tansey, 80 today, Sunday 18 April

FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE by Benignus O'Rourke

Chapter 13 – Take a Little Word

There are many ways of beginning the inward journey to our own hearts. We shall each find the way that suits us best. But *The Cloud of Unknowing* (an anonymous work of Christian mysticism written in Middle English in the latter half of the 14th century) suggests one very simple way.



‘When you sit down to pray in quietness and feel that God is calling you to this kind of prayer, then simply lift up your heart in a loving way. To the God who created you, the God who rescued you. To the God who is now calling you to this way of being with him in silence.

‘This simple reaching out to God is enough,’ the fourteenth-century writer assures us. It is prayer in itself. ‘If you wish, you can enfold this reaching out to God in a single word,’ he says. ‘Take a little word, of one syllable. The shorter the better. Maybe a word like “God” or “love”. Choose any word you like, a word of one syllable that you like best. Fix this word to your heart, so that whatever happens it will not go away.

‘This word is your protection, whether you are at peace or disturbed. With this word you beat on the cloud that stands between you and God. With this word you can beat down any other thoughts that assail you. Any other thoughts that come can be met with this one little word. Good thoughts as well as disturbing ones. Stay with your word, and you will find that all other thoughts will not trouble you for long.’

The tradition of using one simple word or phrase in this way goes back to a contemporary of Augustine’s, John Cassian. In the fourth century he wrote this about keeping prayer as simple as possible: *‘Take a short line of a psalm and it shall be your shield and buckler.’*

Rowan Williams advises that it does not matter at first how much time we give to our silent prayer, so long as we can give some regular time. *‘The challenge is to find enough time to become quiet enough and still enough,’* he says.

‘Somebody once said that the deepest problem in prayer is often not the absence of God but the absence of me. I’m not actually there. My mind is everywhere. So take a few deep breaths, and use a simple formula like the Orthodox “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy.”’

Familiar formulae and rhythms that come naturally actually matter, the Archbishop writes: *‘I’ve sometimes advised people to try to find a verse of a hymn that means something to them or just a single phrase. Things that people only half remember but phrases that stick and, if you let them, sit in your mind.*

‘That’s a beginning of being there. And when you are there God can relate to you. God cannot speak to you if you are not actually there.’

A REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Luke 24: 35-48

The BBC Drama 'Line of Duty' has quite a loyal following. Each episode holds at least one unexpected twist, and many are awed at the mind of Jed Mercurio the writer. How does he think of such an intricate script, with so many threads that all come together in the end? And when the end does indeed dawn, many people are left hanging: *I did not see that coming*. I didn't see that coming. It's almost as if we labour under the misapprehension that we can map out our future with absolute certainty and clarity. Many of the followers of Jesus really did believe that he was to become their temporal leader - their king. The fawning, adoring crowds that waved palms as he rode into Jerusalem were horrified to witness his broken and battered body hanging on a cross, even as he breathed his last. They didn't see that coming. We witness many surprises when we look at God's relationship with humanity as relayed through sacred scripture. From the author of Genesis asking: 'Who told you that you were naked?' to Jesus' question 'Why are you so agitated?' in today's Gospel. We see an account of a relationship with twists and turns and unexpected demands as well as indescribable graces and blessings. Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son, Isaac and a modest food parcel is used, somehow, to feed a crowd of thousands. When we look closely at our own relationship with God in the person of Jesus Christ, we detect signs of an equally involved plotline. Our relationship has evolved and will continue to evolve. Life involves change: to be perfect is to change often.

One way of looking at the way that the Bible unfolds is to see it as an account of our quest for meaning and fulfillment. In today's Gospel, the appearance of Jesus is met with a *state of alarm and fright*. I don't know when you were last 'frightened'. For me it was 12.30 am on Thursday as I awoke from a nightmare when I was convinced that I was being strangled. I rarely have nightmares, but this one was so vivid and real. This was fear like I have never experienced for a long time. This fear was as nothing to the day I was in a local General Hospital some 5 years ago attached to a bank of machines all of which seemed to be vying for supremacy when it came to decibel production. I really did think that I was a 'goner' and this feeling was not helped by the look on the face of the attendant cardiologist who could not disguise his own anxiety. I yearned for peace, for calmness, for equilibrium – above all I wished that my heartbeat would slow and that the pounding in my chest would ease. Calmness did eventually return, and, five years later, my 'fear' is but a memory. We remember good things and we remember bad things. Memory is as much a part of who we are as the skin cells that protect our bodies.

We can only imagine the intensity of the fear experienced by the disciples who huddled together, united by collective alarm and fright. Some days or weeks earlier (chronology is not straightforward when we look at the Resurrection narratives) their whole world, it seemed, had come crashing round their ears. Dreams had been shattered. Jesus had failed; he hung lifeless on the cross. They had seen the events with their own eyes. Yes, there had been talk of sightings - Mary of Magdala was absolutely convinced that he was alive - but these accounts only added to their confusion. And then.... suddenly, he was there, in their midst. They clung to each other as the floor seemed to sway beneath their feet. Heads were spinning and their fear was replaced with anxiety. In the midst of such turmoil, they heard the words: *Peace be with you*.

Like the first gentle raindrops falling onto parched soil, the words brought hope and promise – but at this stage, no more. More rain is needed before the soil can return to fruitfulness just as the disciples will require time to absorb the enormity of the mystery of the Resurrection, even as it unfolded before their very eyes. *I'm hungry – have you anything to eat?* Luke tells us that he ate the grilled fish *before their eyes*. Wow – this was going to need some serious thought. Death is not the end – that's what he's really saying, isn't it? They could see the holes in his hands and in his feet. This was no dream, no nightmare. This was real and the reality of the promise would be accompanied by his 'peace'. 'Peace be with you' – the words brought reassurance, comfort and hope: *Why are you so agitated and why are these doubts rising in your hearts?* When we're gripped by fear, even the simplest of tasks can appear quite daunting. Put simply, Jesus encourages us not to be frightened – nay compels us. He is there for us. So, we should not be fearful of bearing witness, of speaking up, of calling to account. It's part of discipleship. And discipleship brings us peace.