

**Lectionary readings: Acts 5: 27-32; Psalm 118: 14-29;
Revelation 1: 4-8; John 20: 19-31**

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 5:** The disciples were bursting to tell people of the risen Christ. This was their central message - Jesus is alive! They were so excited about it that they couldn't keep quiet. How excited are we about the presence of Christ in our lives? Are we bursting to tell people about Him? Are we showing people by our lives and by our love that Jesus is alive in us? Are we allowing Jesus to set us free from our fears, our resentments, our hurts, our unforgiveness, our guilt, our anxiety? Are we excited about our faith? These are questions that we can reflect on this week and so let God stir up His life within us.
- **Psalm 118:** Here are some verses to reflect on for this week: *'You are my strength and my song; You are my Counsellor and my Friend....You, O Loving Presence, have been my strength; You have stood beside me in the darkness; You have walked with me into the light. I shall not give in to fear, but I shall live in peace....You opened the door leading to new life....This is the gate to Life; those who know Love shall enter through it. I give thanks to You, O Beloved, who answer our prayers and invite us to new Life....You are my Beloved, and I will give thanks to You; You are my Beloved; greatly will I praise You. We give thanks to You, O Blessed One, for You are kind; Your steadfast love endures for ever.'*
(Psalms for Praying)

- **Revelation 1:** This is part of a letter written by John to the seven churches of Ephesus in the province of Asia (now Turkey). John is encouraging these churches and us to commit ourselves to the One who has wholly committed Himself to us. These few verses are in praise of God, who has revealed Himself as a loving Father, who has come into the world in the person of Jesus to share our life and to show us what it means to be fully human, and who is alive in our hearts through His Spirit. This is the God we worship, not a God who is remote, but a God who is alongside us, with us, within us, who has made His home in our hearts, a God who wants to set us free to become the person we were created to be. Why not spend time this week contemplating this God and opening yourself to Him, listening to what He has to say to you?
- **John 20:** The disciples were hiding behind locked doors out of fear. We, too, can be 'locked up' inside out of fear, and we can shut God out because we are afraid of what He is going to ask of us. Do we really believe that God is a God of love? We need to hear Jesus say to us, 'Peace to you', for we are often so uptight, fearful, anxious, troubled, with storms raging within. Jesus breathed His Spirit into His disciples and He wants to breathe His Spirit into us, His Spirit of forgiveness, love and peace. 'If you don't forgive sins, what are you going to do with them?' He asks. Let them weigh you down, embitter you, destroy you? Notice how Jesus in His love comes to Thomas where he is - in his doubt, in his inability to believe. That's what He wants to do to us - come to us in our fear and anxiety. Why not let Jesus minister to you this week just where you are and let Him bring peace to your troubled soul?