

THE POWER OF TOUCH

What is it about touch that makes it so powerful? There seems to be something deeply innate in us as humans that impels us to reach out and touch those around us. Science has proven that touch can relieve stress, calm our nerves, and ease tension within us; and each of us has our own experience of touch comforting and reassuring us in ways that we find it hard to imagine words ever doing.

Picture Jesus touching those who needed healing or reaching out a hand to steady Peter as he started to sink in the sea. See him as he welcomed the little children, blessing them and having them clamber onto his knees to reach for a hug. Imagine the scene when he let the woman wash his feet with her tears and dry them with her hair.

Touch is powerful.

DO NOT TOUCH

'Do not touch' – we see this in shops or museums, on items that are fragile or precious, items we wish to protect. The people that Jesus touched in the gospels were fragile, they were finding life difficult, and were often at the point of breaking when they encountered Jesus.

At the time of Jesus, there were strict rules with regard to a person being considered 'clean' or 'unclean'. For example, if you had a serious skin condition, or were a woman with a bleeding disorder, you were considered 'unclean'. If anyone then touched you while you were in this condition, they too became 'unclean' and unable to worship at the temple or synagogue. You became, literally, untouchable.

We all remember a year ago when COVID-19 hit the

world, and the introduction of 'social distancing' measures to reduce the spread of the virus – how hard it was to get used to remaining outside 'arm's length' from friends, family, and those we were close to. And, while after a time it became 'the new norm', it never felt natural. You see, the level to which we touch others often speaks of the depth of our relationship. For example, when we meet someone new, or someone we know only as an acquaintance, we tend to greet them verbally; and when we meet someone we are good friends with, we may feel drawn to clasp their hand or to greet them with a hug. We are programmed to touch, to express our love in a bodily way.

Jesus ignores the 'do not touch' sign that society held up against people and he touches them. It is because they are so precious to him and he loves them that he reaches out. Jesus' touch is so powerful that it reaches beyond the physical and touches our whole life. Jesus touches us in a way that changes our life. There may be times when you or I feel fragile or feel that we are near to breaking. Remember that you are precious to Jesus. So precious that he always reaches out to grasp your hand, draw you into a hug, pull you in close so that you feel safe and protected. Can you feel his touch? Can you allow him to touch your whole life?

OPEN YOUR HANDS

Jesus wasn't afraid to touch others and show his love for them. He invites us to receive his love and his touch, asking us to give as well as receive. Jesus invites you to open your hands and share his love with others; reach out and feel the power of Jesus' touch in your life. ■



Today's readings

Acts 3:13-15. 17-19

1 Jn 2:1-5

Lk 24: 35-48

The two disciples who are telling their story at the beginning of today's gospel are the two who had encountered Jesus on the Emmaus Road. As they talk excitedly, he comes and stands in the midst of them. Luke stresses the reality of the risen body that can be touched and can eat food. Jesus shows them "his hands and his feet". This might be an echo of showing his wounded hands and feet to the disciples and then especially to Thomas (John 20:20, 27 – last Sunday's gospel). The food, grilled fish, may also be an echo of the meal beside the lake in

John 21. Central to Luke's concern here is the teaching given by the risen Lord to the disciples that enables them to "understand the scriptures". The cross is the key which will open the Old Testament so that it becomes the way to understand Jesus. Our sharing in the Eucharist is another way of deeply experiencing the presence of the Risen Lord.

Soul Space

SERIES: JUST THREE WORDS

Season colour: WHITE

In this series, Clare Gilmore explores the sheer depth contained in 'just three words'.



HE TOUCHED HER

There's a beautiful and much-loved hymn by Carey Landry called 'Lay your hands'. The words of the chorus are as follows: "Lay your hands gently upon us, let their touch render your peace. Let them bring your forgiveness and healing, lay your hands, gently lay your hands." These words reflect the power of being touched by God, and if we look to the gospels, they are full of examples of Jesus physically touching – and being touched by – people, and of the transforming power of that touch. This week our three words ("He touched her") come from the passage in Matthew's Gospel (8:15) that tells of Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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3rd Sunday of Easter – 18th April 2021

Anniversary Masses

Leitrim

Sat 17th 11am Margaret McCrickard (MM)
Sat 17th Patsy McAnulty
Margaret Morgan
John and Agnes Boyd
Mon 19th Eileen McCartan
Wed 21st Mary Ward and Deceased Family
Members
Anna McAnulty
Sat 24th Clare McCrickard

Dechomet

Sat 17th Patrick Hunt and Elizabeth Doyle
Mon 19th John Sweeney
Sat 24th Charlie Rooney

Dromara

Fri 23rd Nancy King

We welcome into Dromara Parish Tommy Foster and Abel Leemon

Collections Parish Trócaire

Dromara	£470	£1407
Drumgooland	£1503	£2221

Centenarian congratulations to Lizzie Mitchell (nee Morgan) of Birmingham, who celebrated her 100th birthday on Easter Sunday. She was born in Legananny. She is the third past pupil of Legananny PS to celebrate her 100th in recent years.

Dromara Cemetery

Any person who is interested in taking on the care and maintenance of the cemetery and church grounds please contact Fr Peter.

Drumgooland St Vincent de Paul

Are you experiencing difficulties and need a helping hand?
Contact us in confidence on 075 8644 7427

Weekend masses

Sat	6:00pm Dechomet	7:30pm Leitrim
Sun	9:00am Gargory	11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses as usual

Mon	9:00am Leitrim &	7:30pm Dechomet
Tues	9:00am Dromara	
Wed	7:30pm Leitrim	
Fri	7:30pm Dromara	

Staying Safe

Please do all you can to help protect yourself and the people around you.

To all those who can wear a face covering, please do so.

Please remember to hold the 2m distance when coming to Holy Communion and when leaving the church, and of course when speaking to people outside.

Please sanitise your hands, and many thanks to all who clean their seats afterwards.

If the church has reached capacity please do not enter.