

**John 20:19-31**

**Locking and unlocking**

The disciples, frightened after the discovery of the empty tomb and Mary's report that she has seen the Lord, are hiding in a house with locked doors. Jesus enters and shows them his wounds. Thomas does not see this and declares that he will not believe it is true unless he sees Jesus' wounds for himself. Despite the doors once again being locked, Jesus enters the house – this time, Thomas believes that he is the risen Lord.



**REFLECT**

Jesus appeared to his disciples when they were hiding behind locked doors. Sometimes we lock ourselves away when we're afraid or uncertain.

**You will need** a padlock and key or a door with a lock and key.

Think about the times you hide your true feelings or put up barriers with others. Hold the padlock/door handle and, as you unlock the padlock/open the door, pray that Jesus will unlock your heart to allow you to experience his peace and the freedom that comes from knowing him.

*Write*

Imagine you're a reporter for a local newspaper. Write the headline and first paragraph of an article reporting on the events that took place in the upper room. What questions might people have? How might these events help to 'unlock' people's understanding of Jesus?



Think of a door that needs unlocking. What would you use to unlock it? What aspects of life or faith would you like to see unlocked in your own life? You might like to look at this painting to get you started. Imagine Jesus standing at the door. What would you say to him?

**Bible notes**



Mary Magdalene told Peter and the beloved disciple that Jesus' tomb was empty. They looked for themselves but then just returned home (20:10). She waited and wept there and was met by her risen Lord. Although she did not touch him, she was able to tell the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord' (20:16-18) who was ascending to his Father and their Father. Rather than rejoicing, they locked themselves away in fear. Despite this, Jesus, who is himself 'an open door, which no one is able to shut' (Revelation 3:8), appeared to them. He showed them his hands and side, breathed the Holy Spirit on them and sent them out to proclaim forgiveness in his name. The disciples followed Mary's example and told the missing Thomas, 'We have seen the Lord', although yet again they shut themselves away.

In John's Gospel, many characters struggle for faith and understanding and engage Jesus in dialogue. Nicodemus asks about being 'born again' (3:4), the Samaritan woman asks about 'living water' (4:10), Martha asks about 'the resurrection' (11:24), and Thomas himself asks about 'the way' (14:4-7). Jesus' willingness to respond helps us to unlock the meaning of unfolding events. Mary asks where the body has been laid, and when Jesus responds, 'Mary', she meets her 'Rabbouni' (20:16). When Jesus again comes through those closed doors, he graciously invites Thomas to 'reach out your hand', and Thomas worships him, 'My Lord and my God'. Thomas, who was so concerned about 'the way' in which Jesus was leading them (14:4-7), was willing to die for his cause (11:16). To be faithful to the way of the cross, he needed to know that the risen one was indeed the wounded one, and that the crucified victim is worthy to be recognised as Lord and worshipped as God. As 'those who have not seen and yet have come to believe' (v.29), we are blessed with the stories of those who asked Jesus their own questions, with one another's testimonies and with the Spirit who continues to unlock for us the truth about Jesus (16:14-15).

**First impressions**

- What aspects of life/faith do you wish could be unlocked for you?
- What would you have asked Jesus if you were in Thomas's position?
- How can you unlock faith for others this week?



**Pray**

Lord, unlock our hearts this Eastertime so we can see the truth of your resurrection and believe in you, even though we haven't seen you. Help us to unlock the good news of your love to those around us, so they can believe in you too. Amen.



Play a game of 20 questions to try to guess the animal, vegetable, or mineral. Why is it important to ask questions? How did Thomas's questions lead him to faith?