Summer holidays are approaching and those heading abroad are checking various things. Is the travel insurance up to date? If you are going somewhere really exotic – are there any vaccinations that we need to get? hen the one that is all too often left tot eh last minute – is the passport still in date?

Passports of course are getting far more complicated. We are all going to have to get one of these biometric passports that will contain coded information about various physical features like shape of our face, fingerprints, iris recognition – all designed to establish who we are, that we really are the person whose details are given on the passport.

Over these Sundays after Easter, we have been reading of the accounts given in the Gospels of the appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples. One feature that occurs in nearly all of these accounts is that of the risen Jesus showing the marks of the nails, the wound in his side. Marks of identity, marks of love, a measure of the love – God so loved the world.

Marks of love not just on a body laid in a tomb, marks of love on the hands feet, the side of a risen Saviour. Marks of a love more powerful than the jealousy, the anger, the spite that nailed him to the cross. A love that can transfigure, that can change, that can transform. A love that changed a group of frightened, despairing men and women and transformed them into evangelists, spreading the Gospel of the risen Christ right across the Roman Empire and beyond. A love that has changed men and women down through

the years right up to the present day, a love that can change even us in all our weakness and inconsistencies.

The risen Christ told his disciples, 'You are witnesses of these things.' Christians down through the ages have been called to bear witness, to show something of the risen life of Christ, to be Christ in the world in which they live.

This morning we are welcoming baby Peter Molloy into the family of the Church in Baptism. As Peter is presented for Baptism, I will declare to his parents and god parents; 'To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.' Christian life is resurrection life, a continuing, life-long process of dying and rising, ding to sin, rising to new life, more faithful, more obedient.

The Baptismal Service reminds us that Christian life is one of witness. At the end of the Service of Baptism this morning I will say to Peter:

You have received the light of Christ.

Walk in this light all the days of your life.

Shine as a light in the world

to the glory of God the Father.

I began by talking about passports, the data to be included in them about our physical characteristics, our finger prints, iris recognition. Marks of identity, marks that show who we are. When the risen Jesus came to his disciples in

those confusing days after they had watched him die on the cross, he showed them his hands and his side; marks of identity – but more than just physical identity like the colour of the hair, of the eyes, the details of a fingerprint – these are marks of love – for God is love and the Son came to reveal, to embody in his own person that love that the Father has for the world.

When we travel abroad, when we return home, we are asked to produce our passports, signs, proofs of who we are. When we go out from this place, we take in the words of the post communion prayer, "ourselves, our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory." We go out as witnesses, as ones who have been with the Lord, as ones who serve the Lord.

Our service will be imperfect, our witness will at times be flawed but God has a strange way of using the imperfect and the flawed to shine something of the light of his love, to reveal something of his Christ in this broken and imperfect world.

May each one of us go out with baby Peter from this place as ones who have received the light of Christ. May we walk in that light all our days. May we shine as a light in the world – and all to the glory of God the Father.