

SUNDAY PLUS

Faithfulness in action

Sharing the road of disappointment

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

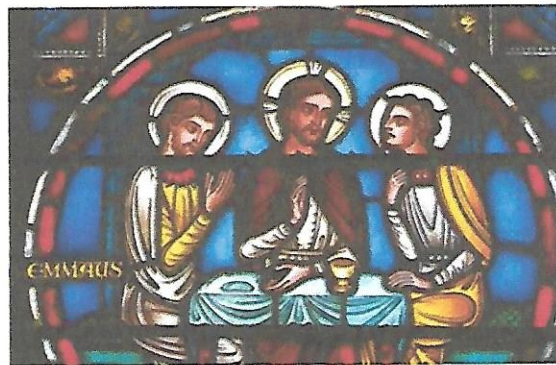
In Luke's story of the journey to Emmaus two disciples are struggling to make sense of the recent death of Jesus. They leave Jerusalem over their shoulders as the place where their hopes met with final defeat. When a stranger joins them on the road, walking by their side, they share their story of disappointment. Jesus, the one they had hoped would set Israel free, is now dead. In their story it becomes clear that they cannot hold two things together: their hope in Jesus and his death.

As the stranger helps the two disciples to make sense of the past in a new light, they respond by inviting him to stay with them. When they go to table, they break bread together. The stranger gives himself away by giving himself away to them. He is the risen

Jesus, and he leaves them with hearts that burn and with eyes that see. They can now face Jerusalem even in the dark and they return there to share their story with the others.

In the Eucharist Jesus comes among us, not as the stranger; rather, he comes to us in word and sacrament to give us new hope to face the future with faith in him.

Our own stories may not sound very different from the two forlorn disciples on the road to Emmaus: we too may be covered in disappointment. But we are invited to tell our stories to the Lord and to listen to him, and to recognise him in the breaking of the bread. Only then can we look with understanding at the past and with hope look to the future.



Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Images supplied by permission of the artist, and reproduced in the book.

A woman's faith

By Natasha Pritchard

Reading the Gospels at first glance, it's easy to focus on the dominant presence of men. Jesus chooses twelve male disciples and spends his time on fishing boats with men, who eventually shared his last supper. Then in Acts, the beginnings of Christianity see Peter and Paul taking charge, and a male priesthood emerging.

Yet look a little closer and the greatest examples of faith are among

the women. It was the women who remained with the crucified Christ, faithful to the end. It was to the women that the risen Christ first appears, who believe instantly, when the men don't recognise Christ even after hours of intimate companionship.

Mary Magdalene only wants to clean the wounds of Jesus' body, whereas Thomas needs to touch them to believe. Let us try to be more like the woman, meeting the risen Jesus and believing in him more fully today.

Natasha Pritchard has worked in Catholic hospital chaplaincy, youth ministry and is now Area Support Chaplain at Methodist Homes.

During his ministry Jesus encountered so many women who were despised, marginalised and cast aside and with great tenderness he restored their dignity. Jesus had a mother and many female friends who followed him to help him in his ministry and to provide support.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week Monday 24 April St George




When a knight won his spurs, in the stories of old,
He was gentle and brave; he was gallant and bold.
With a shield on his arm and a lance in his hand,
For God and for valour he rode through the land.

No charger have I, and no sword by my side,
Yet still to adventure and battle I ride,
Though back into storyland giants have fled,
And the knights are no more and the dragons are dead.

Let faith be my shield and let joy be my steed
'gainst the dragons of anger, the ogres of greed;
And let me set free with the sword of my youth,
From the castle of darkness, the power of the truth

Jan Struther

Lord God, help me to bring your life and love to everyone I meet. Give me the courage to look for you even in the most difficult places.  Amen.

Today:
Acts 2:14, 22-33
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35

Monday:
Acts 6:8-15
John 6:22-29

(E) St George (Solemnity):
Apocalypse 12:10-12
John 15:18-21 or
15:1-8

Tuesday:
1 Peter 5:5-14
Mark 16:15-20

Wednesday:
Acts 8:1-8
John 6:35-40

Thursday:
Acts 8:26-40
John 6:44-51

Friday:
Acts 9:1-20
John 6:52-59

Saturday:
Acts 9:31-42
John 6:60-69

Next Sunday:
Acts 2:14, 36-41
1 Peter 2:20-25
John 10:1-10