

## Reflection Summary – Sunday 28 June

Many thanks to those who sent me answers to the Reflection Questions this week. Please find a summary of these answers below. Some interesting food for thought...

### **1. Which story of St Peter is the one that you can relate to best?**

The stories which highlighted the *humanity* of St Peter were the ones that seemed to really resonate with our congregation. The way he tried to fill an awkward silence with a random reference to building shelters. The way he denied Jesus, not once but three times, when he felt backed into a corner. The story of how he walked on water...but lost his nerve in the early steps. How Peter made great protestations of faith..."You are the Messiah", "I will never desert you" but then he followed up by denouncing the prospect of Jesus' suffering and death ...setting his mind on human and not divine things (Mark 8:31-33). One member of St Peter's identified with a beautiful element within the stories of St Peter: Regardless of Peter's human propensity for awkwardness and mistakes, Jesus offers him forgiveness, reassurance and trust at Breakfast on the Beach (John 21:15 - 19).

### **2. When have you felt that you have failed Jesus?**

I am sure we can all relate to the answers I received in one way or another:

- When I have remained silent when I should have spoken up or taken action
- When my life and lifestyle don't match up with what I profess
- When I have not behaved as generously as I might have done to people who needed help
- When I have not been my best self in a situation
- When I have compared myself with others and felt jealous
- When I don't visit people who I know are stuck at home or in hospital

### **3. When have you been restored by Jesus?**

St Peter's folk listed a variety of practices that help to restore them, again and again. For some, it is through traditional spiritual practices, such as confession and absolution, Sunday services and meditation. Others mentioned spending time in nature, so as to be reminded of God's great and beautiful creation. Daily journaling, examining our thoughts and letting go of what has gone. Even a song or a story in a book or a film was found to bring restoration at times. People – Jesus' work being done through the Holy Spirit by human hands and hearts – were mentioned as an important source or restoration in times of need.

### **4. Looking back at your faith journey, who has laid the foundations for your faith?**

The influence of parents was widely acknowledged here. "My father who used children's Bible notes and prayed with me when I was very small." "My mother who took me to early Communion in my push chair." My Buddhist parents who "taught and showed me, unconsciously, gratitude for nature and people around us." "My parents, who made sure I received a good knowledge and grounding in Christianity as a child at my local church."

Sunday school teachers, school teachers, chaplains and clergy were mentioned as being highly influential in laying the foundations of faith.

Some members of St Peter's also described the influences that nurtured their faith after the foundations were laid. Friends from various faith backgrounds, including Quakers and evangelicals, as well as supportive church communities were important in the faith journey of our congregants. The resilience and the sheer goodness in others were guiding forces in terms of the people we

wanted to become. The Iona liturgies helped to nurture one lady's faith, as did a number of important books and authors, including John Robinson "Honest to God", Teilhard de Chardin, Michel Quoist "Prayers for Life" and Thomas a Kempis "The Imitation of Christ" during Lent.

#### **5. In your 'everyday' this week, how can you be a disciple of Jesus?**

This closing question prompted some beautiful examples of the practices of St Peter's folk that are motivated by their beliefs, including practicing forgiveness, letting go of bitterness and resentment when we are hurt, listening and being friendly, picking up the phone and making contact. Examining why a certain step might be posing as a stumbling block to progress in our lives. Smiling more

Rev. Sue Whitehouse summed up all of the answers I received with this simple sentence:

"Over the years I have come to realise that for most of us we are called to small everyday things."

She went on to elaborate how this plays out in her own life...

*I remember a Steve Bell cartoon in which a figure is hugging a television whose screen shows a child dying of hunger. It shows how inert we can become if we are overwhelmed by big problems and how we then fail to see and follow the steps we are called to take in our own lives. Contrasting this I was very struck when visiting the Cathedral at St David's learning that that Saint's Rule of Life was "Live joyfully. Keep the Faith. Do the little things."*

*So in my everyday discipleship just now I can endeavour to be faithful in prayer; to be concerned for others by keeping in touch with people...phone calls /cards/emails; to know what is happening in the world and to know what action I can take...write letters; contact my MP; give donations; do voluntary work; make changes, even small ones ...to my lifestyle.... I think that the recent articles in the magazine have been good in recommending small, manageable changes we can make..eg bamboo toothbrushes, shampoo bars...*

*And, I can consider what sort of companion I am to others on their journey/pilgrimage through life...*