



Sunday Reflection

Ordinary Time

in the Charges of St Margarets, Renfrew
& St Johns, Johnstone



For Sunday 1 May 2022

Easter 3

Jesus offers new life through his Spirit. Let us worship God together, giving thanks for the life of God's Son and the indwelling of God's Spirit to make all things new.

Reflection for this week's Gospel teaching

"This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead." *John 21:14*

An Illustration to set the scene

Are you excited by the return of BGT onto our weekend TV schedule? DO you peek at the YouTube clips of the worldwide versions of the N's Got Talkent series?

When she appeared on America's Got Talent, Jane Marczewski, also known as **Nightbirde**, sang a song of her own composition, called **"It's Okay"**.

When she spoke to the panel of judges before her performance, she revealed that she had been dealing with cancer in her lungs, spine and liver.

"I'm okay," she told them.

She carried on, saying, *“It’s important that everyone knows that I’m so much more than the bad things that happen to me.”*

Afterwards, she told the panel, who were clearly moved, *“You can’t wait until life isn’t hard any more, before you decide to be happy.”*

On her website she wrote:

I have had cancer three times now, and I have barely passed thirty. There are times when I wonder what I must have done to deserve such a story. I fear sometimes that when I die and meet with God, that He will say I disappointed Him, or offended Him, or failed Him. Maybe He’ll say I just never learned the lesson, or that I wasn’t grateful enough. But one thing I know for sure is this: He can never say that He did not know me... Call me bitter if you want to – that’s fair. Count me among the angry, the cynical, the offended, the hardened. But count me also among the friends of God. For I have seen Him in rare form. I have felt His exhale, laid in His shadow, squinted to read the message He wrote for me in the grout: “I’m sad too.”

Looking at the teaching of the Gospel

Saul, with all the arrogance and entitlement of his status as a Jewish official and a Roman citizen, is leading the persecution of new Christian communities when Jesus stops him in his tracks, takes away his vision and sets him on a new way of suffering love and service.

His mission work and writing have inspired generations of Christians throughout centuries.

Peter, whose grief, guilt and confusion have sent him back to what he knew before he met Jesus, goes fishing to forget the horror and trauma of everything he went through in Jerusalem – including, doubtless, his shame at having denied knowing his Lord in his hour of greatest need.

But then something happened.

“Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach. ”

Before they even recognise him; before they are able to acknowledge him as their friend and teacher, Jesus tells Peter and the other disciples to cast their net on the other side of the boat.

Then, when they have hauled in their huge catch of fish, he invites them to: *“Come and have breakfast.”*

After they have eaten, Jesus teaches Peter about the cost of loving him.

Peter is to carry on Christ’s work on earth, feeding his lambs and tending his sheep.

How can we reflect on the application to our lives?

Sometimes Jesus doesn’t wait for the shockwaves of a trauma to die down.

He doesn’t wait for us to be in full health, or for our anger, guilt and resentment to subside.

He doesn’t wait for us to recognise him, or for our permission to bring us new life, stir up goodness and truth, and show us that we are truly God’s representatives in this world.

He doesn’t even wait for us to be happy, or for our decision to turn (or return) to God.

Sometimes Jesus is just there before us, on the road to Damascus, or on the lake shore, offering to feed and teach us, requiring in return that we feed and teach his lambs.

We are not yet the people that God created us to be – none of us is.

Our new life may begin with encountering Jesus and being baptised with the Spirit, and new opportunities and challenges, new learning and new discoveries, will open our eyes and hearts on the way and convert us again and again to Jesus' love – bringing courage, inspiration and joy.

Living this new life means choosing
good over bad,
love over hate,
life over death.

It means following God's will for us and **being good news in this world** – in the neighbourhoods, communities, families and relationships in which we find ourselves.

"This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead." *John 21:14*

Please share your response to this reflection to Rector@SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk – did anything speak to you? Did you feel challenged, angered, consoled by something in the words? How did God' spirit move you as you read it? Have you shared the words with someone else? Is this a worthwhile thing to make available to folk whilst some folk are not able to meet for corporate worship to share in word and sacrament? What are your thoughts?

www.SECStJohnStMargaret.org.uk