

Home Retreat; Saturday 17 February 2023

Lent “..your heart is greater than your wounds..”

..a time & a season for pointing the finger?
or silently fingering a word in the sand?”

welcome to our Journey through Lent which began few hours ago on Ash Wednesday
..a journey, a pilgrimage of 40days, or is it a lifetime?..

..we shall not cease from exploration & the end of all our exploring will be to
arrive where we started & know the place for the first time.. [TS Eliot]
..pilgrimage is often a search for answers to serious questions in a persons life;
it may be a quest for healing or spiritual guidance..
..pilgrims cross a threshold & enter a new dimension, a liminal, perhaps
dangerous place..

- ..read a short article on BBC news channel on Thursday entitled “the chilly train;
Scotlands “polar express” it describes passenger experience on West Highland Line
between Glasgow & Oban..a 3hr journey where often in winter even in Scotland
where the temperature inside train is colder than that outside..
Scotrail explained their problem is that the heating in coaches relies on the heat of the
diesel engines & in cold weather they retain most of heat to remain efficient..so the
passengers sit for up to 3hrs huddled in overcoats scarves gloves & woolly hats..

..it forms a wonderful image for our Lent..40days to search for answers to serious
personal spiritual questions, for each of us, a season to emerge..to come out of our
own emptiness, dark & rather stale..safe [perhaps its greatest danger]..our engine-
room in faith, where we seem to consume every last drop of fuel [grace] in ensuring
traction on our own personal journey towards the kingdom..& with precious little left
to warm the hearts souls & lives of all those who, as passengers, fellow pilgrims, rely
on us for inspiration guidance & reassurance, through the heat passion energy of our
prayers & good works for them, that “together” we will reach our destination..

- ..& the essence of our Lenten journey is offered to us in 1st rdg at Mass last Thursday
our first day of action after the Ashing of Wednesday Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Moses
on God’s behalf “I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, so that
you & your descendants may live in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice,
clinging to him..for in this your life consists”..
..no mention of Lenten resolutions nor Easter duties..fasts or abstinence..just living
simply “live in the love of the Lord your God, [your God] obeying [listening] to his
voice, clinging to him”..love / my Lord my God / listening / clinging..

my thoughts drifted on tide & into lectio divina with word “clinging”..you may know
of my love of the sea, & the Beach Prayer Walks I love to lead, where on pilgrimage
we get close to the sea in all its moods, & weave Jesus the fisherman to our
discipleship as his crew..a motley crew of misfits like first disciples, & their choice

their decision their Lent “Master where do you live?”..his answer then & now as we begin this Lent..a Lent like no other..”come & see” ..”choose life”
 ..& I thought of the limpet..you discover them at low tide moments when we choose to wander somewhat aimlessly in among rocks & explore..rockpools, seaweed, flotsam & jetsom, listening to waves & seabirds..smelling the sea..am I talking about the seashore or our first steps off the shore/beach of Ordinary Time which finished on Shrove Tuesday, still some weeks away from high tide of Easter Day..& now the liminal space twixt our ordinary life of faith & our sharing in the Resurrection..40days to wander & explore, & discovering refinding parts of your real self you lost weeks months years ago, washed away by a crisis or infidelity..a poor choice..when we tried to go it alone donning a mask of pretence self-sufficiency, independence..the prodigal son or daughter who wanted out for good sound reasons, was offered our share of the inheritance..the pearl of great price..let go in love by those who did & will always love us most..& “left for a distant country”..relationally spiritually..”choose life” & we thought we had..
 ..as I share with you the story of the limpet I wonder if you might recognise someone you know very well..in your relationship with your Rock [Jesus himself] & your fellow limpets..

- “a herbivorous marine snail”..& you now “a beloved child of God”..they/we live in an intertidal zone, well adapted to amphibious life [in Christ & in the world] a thick conical shell [an external mask a hardness of self protection & deception] & a strong muscular foot [our feet in servant discipleship grounded in faith generous in self sacrificial love] combine to make it formidably defensive against predators in & out of water [those who would seek to injure us in family parish or in outside life]. Their shell & ours shaped in such a way it is difficult to grasp & thick enough to be difficult to break..[hardness of heart toughened by setbacks trials testings which have toughened our surface & our resistance to others seeking to be loved by us or to love us]..shell also perfectly covers the entire soft part of the body [the heart] & forms a tight bond to its home rocks that it is very difficult to prise off.
 [wonderful image of your home rock to which to whom you are tightly bonded]
 it/you are shell shaped to give it a low profile, protecting it from crashing waves & strong coastal currents [what or whom has crashed into your life this last week?..& to whose currents of behaviour & relationship are you affected by at the moment?]
 it/you would be unable to survive if it could not remain in its preferred habitat..[& where is your preferred habitat?..your “go to” place when life gets difficult impossible ..can you call it “home”?..or a place to journey as a pilgrim to? for me Berwick Pier..]
 ..furthermore, during low tides [our low tide moments] the tight seal it creates with its rock prevents it from drying out in the sun [our seal with our rock Christ ..prevents us from drying out in heat of day & its needs temptations crises..grace lubricates as we cling on]..
 they/we move around during the first few years of life, then settle in one home for the remainder of their life [your lifelong commitment to family parish friendships for better or for worse, until death sees us together everlastingly in the joy of our ultimate Easter garden in Heaven]..they return home from feeding to the same spot in their rock [notice “in” not “on” so much more depth traction intimacy] same spot in their rock that’s been worn down by abrasion from their bodies..
 [abrasion in our families me in my community as we rub up against each other daily 42times daily, as our unique shape & angularity comes up against those of our loved ones & abrasion occurs daily twice daily tidally & each time each upset crisis fall-out

brings gradual reshaping externally internally physically emotionally psychologically sexually & spiritually..”returning home from feeding to the same spot in their rock”
..&

▪ as we begun with TS Eliot

..we shall not cease from exploration & the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started & know the place for the first time..

..we find ourselves..”find our real selves” surely the essence of our Lenten journey, we find ourselves in story of prodigal son & daughter we began with “the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started & know the place for the first time”

..not Oban Station or Berwick Pier, but the homecoming moment where you & I, after all our exploring, appropriate or shameful, life-giving or destructive, saintly or sinful, expecting to receive the dressing down of a lifetime from our Rock himself, receive in the same spot in our Rock that’s been worn down by the abrasions of our lifetime so far, the hug of a lifetime, a pair of sandals & the best robe..lost & found..amazing grace..

• ..& all because, 72hrs into Lent 2024, you chose to “choose life” as you chose to join us here this very morning as a fellow limpet of mine..& our community of limpets here..

..a time a moment a season & a full tide to cling on..return home & settle now into the one home for the remainder of your eternal life..

in Sebastian Barry’s story of Willie & Shep where Shep having killed a sheep would have properly to be killed himself, come down into the farmyard to meet Willie’s father so the killing could take place..

& there is a wonderful liturgy of limpets meeting rock & “the crime is never spoken of again & the dog lived until he died..the mercy of the fathers when love is betrayed by an emergency & we see at last that

“we are loved needed, & not to be lived without, & greatly..”

..no wonder one of our Lent Prefaces calls Lent..& now this particular Lent for us.. “a joyful season”..

..do please enjoy it..& enjoy being you..

• ..uploaded for you on our website, for you to season into this Retreat Day & your Lent

poem “Trasna” Sr Raphael Considine PBVM

“this is Trasna the crossing place choose!

..this is Trasna the crossing place come!”

A painting of woman caught in adultery [Jn 8:1-11] by Peter Bruegel the Elder. 1565 & a meditation..self examination..I compiled on it some years ago

A painting of the return of the prodigal by Sieger Koder called “Home!”

& the full text of all I have shared with you this morning

I hope they will prove to be food for the journey as you & I return to our preferred habitat..

..thank you for being here this morning..

[blessing]

The pilgrims paused on the ancient stone in the mountain gap.
Behind them stretched the roadway they had travelled.
Already a far journey... was it a lifetime?
Ahead, mist hid the track.
Unspoken, the questions hovered.
Why go on?...is life not short enough?
Why seek to pierce its mystery?
Why venture further on strange paths, risking all?
Surely that is a gamble for fools... or lovers.
Why not return by the known road?
Why be a pilgrim still?
A voice they knew called to them saying;
This is Trasna, the crossing place...
Choose! Go back if you must,
You will find your life easily by yesterday's road.
You can pitch your tent by yesterday's fires.
There may be life in the embers yet.
If that is not your deepest desire, stand still.
Lay down your load,
Take your life in your two hands,
(gently... you are trusted with something precious)
while you search your heart's yearnings;
What am I seeking? What is my quest?
When your star rises deep within,
You will have light for your steps.
...this is Trasna, the crossing place. Choose!
...this is Trasna, the crossing place. Come!

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John 8: 1- 11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives

At daybreak he appeared in the Temple again; and as all the people came to him, he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman along who had been caught committing adultery; and making her stand there in full view of everybody, they said to Jesus, 'Master, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery,

and Moses has ordered us in the Law to condemn women like this to death by stoning. What have you to say?' They asked him this as a test, looking for something to use against him. But Jesus bent down and started writing on the ground with his finger.

As they persisted with their question, he looked up and said, 'If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her'. Then he bent down and wrote on the ground again. When they heard this they went away one by one, beginning with the eldest, until Jesus was left alone with the woman, who remained standing there.

He looked up and said, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one, sir' she replied. 'Neither do I condemn you,' said Jesus 'go away, and don't sin any more.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

