

Readings: Ez: 16-21; 2 Cor 5: 14-20; John 21: 15-17

NB This is the framework prepared for the talk which was done without a script

Can you think of a time when you were really let down by a friend? I can. She was also my boss and we used to go on holidays together. One day something happened that made me feel she was manipulating me and I didn't like it. Because she was the boss, it was difficult to know how to handle the situation and it troubled me for a long time.

In the Gospel I've just read, Peter and Jesus were having a conversation which was dealing with a breakdown in trust. You'll remember that Peter was one of Jesus's closest friends. They had spent three years together. Peter had listened and watched and wondered. It was he who said to Jesus: "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God". He'd said he was prepared to die for him. Jesus had even changed his name from Simon to Peter and told him that he was the Rock on which he was going to build his Church. And yet when Jesus was on trial for his life, Peter said three times that he didn't even know him.

Within a few hours Jesus was dead. Peter was in a dark place. He knew he'd betrayed his friend. His life seemed to have fallen apart. Maybe he should go back to being a fisherman and forget the last three years.

And it was after a fishing trip that the risen Jesus met Peter, cooking him fish over a camp fire for breakfast. And he asks him "Simon" (note his old name), "Do you love me?" Between them lies all the baggage of Peter's denial. And Peter replies: "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you". The question is repeated another two times, and each time Peter replies that he does. Jesus recommissions him to go and feed his sheep. In those tense, eyeballing moments, Peter's friendship with Jesus was restored. He did go on to be the rock on which the church has been built. And he was crucified because he was a follower of Jesus.

Today we're remembering our Patron Saint, German. We know little about him. But we do know that he had to venture out by sea to an unknown place in order to bring his faith to our Island. And some of us have experienced the challenge of crossing that same sea in a storm, in a much bigger boat.

German's faith was strong enough to take him out into the unknown, facing physical danger. We've seen how Peter was vulnerable, but still went on to tell many people about Jesus, and to die for his faith. So I have 2 questions for you:

- 1) Thinking back to the friendship that was challenged or even broken. Is there any way you could restore that friendship? And if there is, please – go and do it. It will make a big difference to you, and to the other person.
- 2) How important is your faith? Is it more than coming on a Sunday? God may not be calling you to go abroad to tell others about Jesus like German did (or he may!). He may not be calling you to die for your faith – but some Christians in other countries are. But he is calling you to follow him. And if you're willing, he will begin to change you so that you can see the world through his eyes.

If you'd like to embark on your own Christian journey for the first time, or if there are issues you need to sort out with God, there will be two people ready to pray with you after the service. I pray that you too may join the Adventure!

Rosemary Clarke

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