

Some questions to talk about

1. How did you feel when reflecting on Pope Francis' invitation to have a personal encounter with Jesus every day? What is your response?
2. What opportunities are there already in your community for learning to pray and for growing in prayer? What else would you like to see offered in your parish?

Take a moment to pray

Be still and know that you are in the presence of God.

We ask God to bless the work of everyone who offers welcome and encouragement to those who come to our churches: those who come for a funeral, a wedding or a baptism, families involved in preparing for a First Holy Communion or Confirmation of a child, people who come back to Church after a long time away.

We pray for everyone who is broken and hurting and needs the love and mercy of Jesus.

**Loving Lord Jesus,
may we be open
to meeting with you heart-to-heart each day.
May these encounters transform us
and lead us more deeply
into the mystery of your presence.
Through the power of your life-giving
Holy Spirit, may we radiate your
presence so that others may be drawn
to the life of faith.
Amen.**



Leaflet One Meeting Jesus – the only one who can save me.

Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



Danny's Story

It was time to take the kids to Mass. To be honest it was a hassle on a Sunday morning. Sunday's the day for a lie-in isn't it? My wife isn't Catholic so it's up to me to make sure that the three children make their First Holy Communion. Father Mike stressed that we were expected to be there on Sundays.

I can't explain what happened next. It was just Mass wasn't it? The hymns were ones I had sung for years but it felt like the words were all new, like I was singing them for the first time. Something Father said about how blessed we are really hit home. He told us to look at the cross and to know how much God loves each one of us. I looked and something inside me just gave way.



"Are you OK Dad?" I heard my eldest say and felt a tug on my arm. He could see me wiping a couple of tears from my eyes. I put my arm round him and told him everything was great.

At the end of Mass I hung around while everyone shook Father's hand and made their way out of the church. I just had to tell someone. As I heard the words coming out of my mouth to Father Mike my eyes filled up again. "It's all true!" I said. "He really loves me. It's like someone switched the light on. It's all true."

From the outside it probably looks like my life is just the same. Family, work, football, all the usual stuff. But something big has happened inside me. He's alive. He loves me. Nothing will ever be the same again.

The story above is true with some details changed to protect privacy.

Scripture: Mark 2:1-12

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—"I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home." And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"



Reflection

There was a time when sickness was seen as your own fault, that somehow you must have deserved it. We are blessed to live in an age when we don't think like that anymore. But this man on the stretcher must often have wondered if God was punishing him. Deep inside perhaps he felt unloved, wrong, abandoned. Jesus looks into his eyes with love, compassion, mercy. "My son," he says, "your sins are forgiven." Jesus knows where this man needs to be loved and healed. Jesus knows his deepest need.

Faith comes alive when we know that Jesus looks at us with this same love and compassion. In our place of deepest need, where we know we have failed, where we feel we cannot be loved, Jesus is right there. "My child," he says, "Your sins are forgiven." In His death on the cross and in his resurrection Jesus has defeated all sin and evil in the world. It is today that we like Danny can receive the forgiveness and love that only he can give us. This is the joy of the gospel – to discover the gentle and healing mercy of Jesus for me today.

Questions to ponder

What can we learn from Danny's story and from the scripture reflection?

What are the things in life you struggle with that might need the healing and forgiveness of Jesus today?

How might you, in the coming week, help to bring people to a place where they might meet Jesus for themselves?

From "The Joy of the Gospel" by Pope Francis

On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: "Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you". (164)

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unflinchingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord". (3)



For if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others? (8)