

Stella Maris

apostleshipofthesea.org.uk

November 2019

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**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) is a Catholic charity supporting seafarers worldwide.

We provide practical and pastoral care to all seafarers, regardless of nationality, belief or race. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors welcome seafarers, offer welfare services and advice, practical help, care and friendship.

Stella Maris is the largest ship visiting network in the world, working in 339 ports with 227 port chaplains around the world.

We are only able to continue our work through the generous donations of our supporters and volunteers.

To support Stella Maris with a donation visit www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/ways-donate

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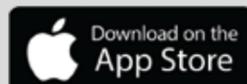
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Download our free App

Search for 'StellaMaris' in the App store'



Stella Maris provides seafarers with practical support, information and a listening ear

Port Focus: Genoa, Italy



Genoa has a long and proud history as one of Italy's four historic Maritime Republics along with Venice, Pisa and Amalfi. The city of Genoa was where perhaps the most famous sailor in history was born and learnt his trade – Christopher Columbus! Today it is the busiest commercial port in Italy and one of the busiest in the Mediterranean.

The port was also the first in Italy to host a Catholic outreach to seafarers. In the 1930s Father Desmond Chute, an English priest residing in Rapallo, introduced to Italy the way in which the outreach to seafarers had already been set up in Britain. Genoa soon opened a seafarers' centre with a library at the Church of San Marco, near the old pier.

Cardinal Minoretto (Archbishop of Genoa) approved this apostolate and it quickly extended its work throughout Italy.

With humble and patient work, in the premises in Via del Molo, a small group of generous volunteers, with humble and patient work, began the complex task of meeting seafarers on ships, on the streets and in hospitals. They looked after them in a welcoming and hospitable environment providing for their material needs together with a strong spiritual component. There was a great need since many seafarers were far from their families, their homes and the Church and as a result of their special working conditions most seemed to have abandoned the practice of their faith and their spiritual life.

In the intervening 90 years Genoa has been a place of welcome for all those who sail the seas of the world. Every day the volunteers of Stella Maris, Genoa, are a sign of welcome and hope for the people of the Sea. For everyone who visits there is the need to rest, to put their feet on dry land, to play, to buy a souvenir for the family, to get in touch with their loved ones (by phone, Internet or email), to read the



news from back home, but above all to be listened to. In the Stella Maris Centre in Genoa, seafarers find a real "home away from home", where the warmth of truly interested hospitality is offered.

THE SERVICES WE OFFER

- Present in the port of Genoa, of Multedo and of the VTE in Prà-Voltri
- Daily visits on board ships
- Two seafarers' centres
- News printing and distribution in various languages
- Help to communicate with families in their countries of origin
- Prayer, Mass and Confession
- Free minibus service
- Assistance to abandoned ships
- Emergency fund

Stella Maris seafarers' centre

Piazzetta Don Bruno Venturelli 9 (next to the church of San Teodoro in the Dinegro district)
Open from 5.30pm till 10.30pm

FREE MINIBUS SERVICE

Toll Free Number
800 984 826
only using an Italian SIM card

Stella Maris seafarers' centre Voltri Terminal

Stella Maris VTE – Voltri Terminal Europe
Piazza Giovanni Lerda 1
Open from 6.00pm till 9.30pm

Call **SHUTTLE BUS VTE** terminal
+39 010 69961 / +39 335 6987084

Telephone: +39 010 265684

Email: genoa@stellamaris.it

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Sunday at Sea

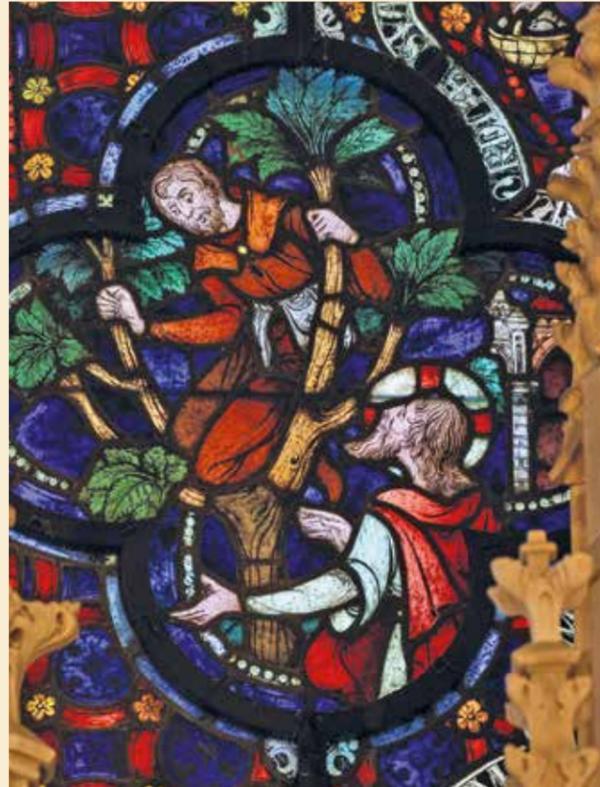
31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

3rd November 2019

Commentary by Fr Colum Kelly

Gospel Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house' they said. But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'



The Gospel and You

The story of Zacchaeus is unique to the gospel of Luke. The man is a wealthy tax collector who was despised by the people of his community and seen as a dishonest man. I find him a rather engaging personality. He reminds me in some ways of the disciple Peter. He is spontaneous and a bit impetuous but there appears to be a real sincerity beneath it all.

Although he is a person of importance, it doesn't prevent him from climbing a sycamore tree to get a look at Jesus, nor does it stop him acknowledging his faults as a sinful man.

This admission of his guilt opens the door to allow Jesus to come in and begin the healing process. Jesus enters the lives of so many irrespective of their status. All he needs to enter and heal is a self-awareness that we are in need of his transforming love. We can be rich or poor, Jesus can change our lives.

In many of the stories in the gospel, Jesus seems to change all who meet him.

By accepting them as friends, Jesus takes away their shame, humiliation and guilt. By showing them that they matter to him as people, he gave them a sense of dignity and self-worth.

There seem to be three key elements in the story. Jesus SEES him. He WELCOMES him and he CHANGES him. Jesus informed this sinful man that he was valued in the sight of God. Jesus is never too busy saving the world to stop and save people like Zacchaeus, or us.

Luke's challenge is simple. Are we open to God seeing us as we really are? Do we allow him to welcome us or do we shy away? And change us into new people strong in faith.

On our ships how do we catch sight of the Lord as Zacchaeus did?

Hopefully there will be no sycamore to climb, unless we have run aground, but even in the bleakness of the empty seas the Lord is there inviting us to see him so that he may welcome and change us. Trust in Him!

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

10th November

Gospel Luke 20:27-38

Some Sadducees – those who say that there is no resurrection – approached Jesus and they put this question to him, 'Master, we have it from Moses in writing, that if a man's married brother dies childless, the man must marry the widow to raise up children for his brother. Well, then, there were seven brothers. The first, having married a wife, died childless. The second and then the third married the widow. And the same with all seven, they died leaving no children. Finally the woman herself died. Now, at the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife since she had been married to all seven?'

Jesus replied, 'The children of this world take wives and husbands, but those who are judged worthy of a place in the other world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry because they can no longer die, for they are the same as the angels, and being children of the resurrection they are sons of God. And Moses himself implies that the dead rise again, in the passage about the bush where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is God, not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all men are in fact alive.'

The Gospel and You

Jesus is challenged by the Sadducees in this their only appearance in Luke's gospel.

So who were they? The Sadducees were the aristocratic leaders of Israel who despised the Pharisees for their 'modern' beliefs and interpretations of the law. They were the ultra

conservatives who only accepted the first five books of the bible, the books concerning laws. They did not believe in bodily resurrection and this confrontation with Jesus was an attempt to get him on their side and discredit the pharisees.

The question asked by the Sadducees is very contrived, intended not to seek clarity but to present a tricky conundrum. It can be very easy for religious people to waste time and energy in irrelevant debates that do nothing to promote the cause of the Gospel nor shed any light on real-life issues. These queries can be used by someone to show how clever they are and can become a distraction from our real tasks as Christians. Like the Sadducees in today's gospel reading we can easily find ourselves caught up in endless discussions on minor points of liturgy or of Church law, without realising that we are wasting precious time and perhaps creating needless division.

The Sadducees make fun of the concept of resurrection and in this way avoid listening to the message of Jesus about the reality of the resurrection and how the resurrected state is a new creation where we are sharing in the divine life of God. It is traditional at this time of year to remember our loved ones who have gone to their rest. Services with great pomp will be held in grand churches and at monuments of commemoration. But maybe in our quiet place or cabin we keep them forever in our mind in our beautiful prayer for the repose of their souls.

Our simple prayer expresses our love for them, a love that lasts a long way after death.

"Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace." Hopefully, one day someone will recite that prayer calling to mind their love for us.



33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

17th November 2019

Gospel Luke 21:5-19

When some were talking about the Temple, remarking how it was adorned with fine stonework and votive offerings, Jesus said, 'All these things you are staring at now – the time will come when not a single stone will be left on another: everything will be destroyed.' And they put to him this question: 'Master,' they said 'when will this happen, then, and what sign will there be that this is about to take place?'

'Take care not to be deceived,' he said 'because many will come using my name and saying, "I am he" and, "The time is near at hand." Refuse to join them. And when you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen but the end is not so soon.' Then he said to them, 'Nation will fight against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.

'But before all this happens, men will seize you and persecute you; they will hand you over to the synagogues and to imprisonment, and bring you before kings and governors because of my name – and that will be your opportunity to bear witness. Keep this carefully in mind: you are not to prepare your defence, because I myself shall give you an eloquence and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relations and friends; and some of you will be put to death. You will be hated by all men on account of my name, but not a hair of your head will be lost. Your endurance will win you your lives.'



The Gospel and You

Here we find Jesus teaching in the temple in what was to be his last appearance there before his Passion. The disciples marvel at its beauty but Jesus talks about its destruction. In people's understanding at the time, the temple would be destroyed at the time when the world would come to an end.

The temple was many, many times larger than any building in Galilee. It was immense and glorious, a tremendous symbol of national pride.

"Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, 'As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.'

These words throw the disciples into confusion and fear. They want to know when this will happen and what warning they might get. Jesus's answer is not a great help. He promises them war, earthquakes, famine, pestilence and persecution but whereas these can occur in any generation, what really makes them anxious is talk of families betraying families. Family ties would not protect the disciples who would have to carry the cross as Jesus did.

I pray for the people of the sea who try to maintain family ties from a great distance.

When you are thousands of miles from loved ones, even small trivial things can grow out of proportion. A small problem that could be resolved face to face can become a massive difficulty that seems impossible to resolve.

The glory of the Temple is a reminder that many of us live in the midst of beautiful structures. We worship in beautiful churches. Many of our homes are lovely. Some of our ships are grand and majestic on the seas.

But the lovely human-made structures that surround us must never be the ultimate focus for our lives. When we gather for prayer, we touch something much more significant than any building or structure. We celebrate our belief that God is with us on land or at sea and we are in a relationship with Him that is beyond destruction.

"The time is near at hand."

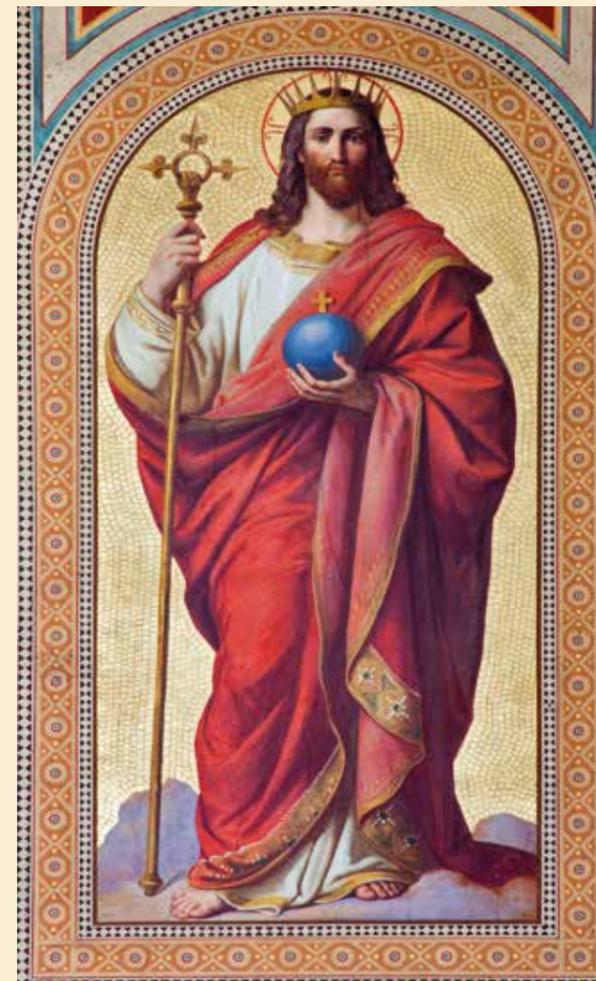
Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe

24th November

Gospel Luke 23:35-43

The people stayed there before the cross watching Jesus. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too, and when they approached to offer him vinegar they said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself.' Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews.'

One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus,' he said 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied 'today you will be with me in paradise.'



The Gospel and You

Today we meet the remarkable character of the good thief. His words are a great contrast to those around who mocked Jesus, including the other thief who scorned Jesus for his inability to free himself and them from their crosses.

The Good Thief knew he had wasted his life, committed more than his share of harm to others. He wasn't even looking for God or for forgiveness but somehow his faith awakened something in him just before his death when everything was forgiven, washed clean. There was no great reckoning to be had, no pound of flesh to be paid. He encountered only God's forgiveness and love.

On the cross he recognised the justice of his sentence; he did not try to excuse himself; he accepted full responsibility for his deeds and now his sentence.

And maybe here is a lesson for us – always claiming to be innocent! When something does go wrong in life, there is an unfortunate tendency to blame someone, anyone, so long as the blame doesn't rest with us. It is very likely this bandit had heard about Jesus, who was stirring the people of Jerusalem and throughout the whole country from Galilee to Judea, but it seems unlikely that he had ever heard his preaching or witnessed one of his miracles.

Yet the words from his cross "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom" portray the faith and hope of a man who had already been touched by divine love. The good thief has only seen the patience of Jesus; has only heard him praying for his enemies. It is enough for him. He believes.

On our ships that tendency to blame others for our mistakes can be very destructive in the harm it does to others. And isn't it the small person whom we can easily make a scapegoat, someone who cannot answer back?

Today's gospel reminds us that before we can receive forgiveness, we must be truly able to acknowledge our faults and not try to pass them on to another.

A lesson for us all.

"Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom"

The Good Life: My life review

Examination of Conscience

What is conscience?

Our conscience is our capacity to judge with our reason what is right and wrong in our behaviour. For Christians, this means the ability to tell what truly counts as loving. Every human being who can think has a conscience. Like all human capacities, however, our conscience needs to be properly developed.

Some people have consciences that are badly educated or underdeveloped. Others neglect or ignore what their conscience might be telling them. Others again are too hard on themselves, and blame themselves for things that are not their fault.

That is why we need to make sure:

- that we form our consciences well;
- that we examine our consciences regularly;
- that we give thanks for God's grace working in our lives.

Past, present and future

Most people think of conscience in relation to the past. To 'have a guilty conscience' is to be aware of something you have done or said or thought that was wrong. ('I shouldn't have lied to my mother.') Conscience, though, relates to the present and future as well as the past. When we experience temptation, our conscience is at work. The same is true when we are puzzled about the right course of action. ('Ought I have an expensive holiday?') We also use our

conscience when we ask about good works that we have neglected or forgotten. ('Have I really listened to my colleagues?')

Forming conscience

Most of us are guided at first by our parents, then our teachers. When we are small they teach us by example, and by explaining basic rules and virtues. ('Share your sweets with your sister.')

As we grow older, we begin to take responsibility ourselves for understanding why certain behaviour is good and bad, and acquire the ability to judge new situations for ourselves. But there will always be times when we need to listen to wise friends, who can advise us over a dilemma or put us straight when we are going wrong.

Catholics have a particular responsibility to follow the teaching of the Church, which passes on the distilled moral wisdom of Christians over the centuries. Therefore, we must learn what this teaching is. Again, we often need wise and experienced Catholic friends to help us to understand such teaching and to see how it relates to our own lives.

Christians also need to educate their consciences about the ethics of their particular work. So, for example, Seafarers need to understand the teaching of the Church on the purpose of work in God's plan and the dignity of workers.

Examining conscience

To 'examine your conscience' means to use your conscience to judge your behaviour, attitudes, character and future intentions against the standard of love. It is good to get into the habit of examining your conscience regularly, remembering to do this in the context of prayer. If we begin and end with gratitude for God's generosity and compassion, our recognition of our own weakness becomes a source of blessing. It can be helpful to check through different areas of your life in a systematic way for example, work, home, friends and prayer. (Some do this by writing a diary.) It is good to include your responsibilities to your job and fellow crew, to wider society, especially those in need, and to the environment.

How do we carry out the check? For some people, traditional lists are sometimes useful: for example, the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes or the Seven Deadly Sins. Others attend to moments of disharmony and ponder how they might have responded better. Whatever the method, the fundamental criterion is always love.

A maturing conscience

The Catechism of the Catholic Church describes the education of the conscience as 'a lifelong task'. As people mature in the Christian life, through deepening their prayer, their familiarity with the Scriptures and their practice of love, the way that they examine their conscience will also change. Their sense of freedom will grow, as they experience the desire for goodness within themselves, not imposed from outside. They will become less likely to commit bad actions, and more sensitive to the ways in which their words, thoughts and feelings, and their underlying character, fall short in love. For example, rather than, 'Did I get drunk and start fighting?', they may now ask, 'Was I tactless?' They will gradually set higher standards for themselves.

When our consciences are immature, they will bother us only when something is seriously wrong. As they mature, they will become more continually alert and attentive, silently assessing for us the goodness of everything that we are doing or thinking, as a good navigator always has a background awareness of the sea conditions ahead. As people become more practised in examining their consciences, they develop an eye for the areas of their lives that need attention. This also helps them, like a good navigator, to anticipate hazards in their moral life. As their life of prayer deepens, they will also connect their

When we experience temptation, our conscience is at work. The same is true when we are puzzled about the right course of action.

outward actions more closely with the work of the Holy Spirit through and within them. In this way, their examination of conscience will become ever more closely united with their search for God's will for their lives, and with gratitude.

Conscience and truth

Our conscience is what allows us to take responsibility for our actions. For this reason, we should always follow it, even though we know that it is not infallible. Therefore we cannot ever be blamed for honestly following our conscience. However, we may well be at fault for having a mistaken conscience, for example if we have not listened to good advice, or have failed to educate ourselves in the Church's teaching. In short, to examine our conscience is an essential part of our search for truth: the truth about ourselves and the truth about God, who is Truth itself. As we grow in the practice of examining our consciences we become more truthful and more sensitive to what is true. In this way, we also become more loving, for the God who is Truth is also the God who is Love.

One suggested method

There are many ways of examining one's conscience. Find what suits you and try to practise this regularly, though your approach may change over time.

Here is an example of a possible method:

- Choose a regular 5-10 minute period, perhaps before going to bed.
- Choose a quiet space in which to be.
- Begin by consciously putting yourself in the presence of God, with a prayer for wisdom and discernment.
- Reflect on the past day, giving thanks for what God has given you and done through you.
- Reflect on moments when you might have acted or spoken in a less than loving way. Ask yourself if these were unexpected, or if they reflect an underlying weakness in your character. Reflect also on obligations you might have neglected or forgotten.
- Ask forgiveness for your specific failings.
- Make a resolution for the future: for example, to say sorry to someone, or to tackle a regular weakness. You might resolve simply to pray about a problem.
- Give thanks for the time spent with God, allowing him the space to work in and through your life.

When your sins weigh on your conscience, know that as a Catholic you can receive the Sacrament of Confession which is a wonderful way to ask God for forgiveness and to be healed. Next time you are in port contact the Stella Maris chaplain and ask to arrange for confession, you won't regret it! Contact details for Stella Maris port chaplains are at www.apostleshipofthesea.org.uk/aos-worldwide



Faith Stories

Sharing Faith Stories

By Fr Dwight Longenecker

At a conference my sister met a missionary who was working with people in the jungles of Southeast Asia. The atheist government there had banned all foreigners. They had especially banned religious workers from having contact with the indigenous tribes. If trespassers were found, they were imprisoned, tried, and executed.

The missionary – we'll call him Edward – decided to live in the jungle just across the border from the country where he had been called to work. He took excursions across the border to meet with the tribal peoples he had befriended. On one trip he was caught by the government troops. They took him to a deserted village in the jungle and threw him into a well.

Down in the well Edward did the only thing he could do: pray. He prayed for three days, and finally he heard a voice calling him. He looked up to see a white man peering down into the well, calling his name. The man threw Edward a rope and pulled him out. He spoke with an English accent and wore a white suit and straw hat. The rescuer politely indicated the road out of the jungle, wished Edward a good day, and then strode off into the jungle himself.

Edward had never seen the man before, and it seemed impossible that another white man would be anywhere in the area. Was the mysterious Englishman really an angel who delivered Edward from death?

Faith stories work

Everyone in the Church is buzzing with the term “the new evangelisation,” but many don't know what the term means or how they are to evangelise. You can take courses and read books on the subject. You can adopt new tricks, gimmicks, and techniques. They are all well and good, but the simple fact is that the new evangelisation is not much different from the old evangelisation. We may have new technologies for communication, but what we are communicating is the same: We are communicating our faith stories.

What do I mean by a “faith story”? The story of Edward's deliverance from the well is a faith story. A faith story is any account we share about how our Catholic faith has been real in our lives. It may be a dramatic miracle story, or it may be a down-to-earth story about an answered prayer, an unexpected grace, or a simple blessing.

Why are faith stories the cornerstone of evangelisation? Because people are hungry to hear about the reality of God's work in the world. We all need to be catechized properly and learn the truths of the faith. We also need to learn how to behave as followers of Jesus Christ, but more than these doctrines and rules, we also need to hear about the firsthand experiences of those who are walking with Christ.

Faith stories evangelise because they remind people of the reality of God in ordinary life. God is not a theory. He is alive and active in the world. Jesus Christ is not a dead historical figure. He is alive and active in the world. The Holy Spirit is not a theological idea. He is alive and active in the world, and faith stories show us how that is true.

In the beginning...

...there were faith stories. Stop and think about it for a moment. The largest part of sacred Scripture consists of faith stories. One way to understand the Bible is to see it as one great saga of the relationship between God and humanity. From Adam and Eve to the patriarchs and prophets, coming to fulfillment in the Gospels and continuing with the adventures of the apostles – the Bible is one long, exciting, and thrilling faith story.

The story of God's love for his rebellious children continues in the history of the Church. For 2,000 years we have been telling the faith story of the



The Holy Spirit is not a theological idea. He is alive and active in the world, and faith stories show us how that is true.

people of God. Through the history of the Church and the lives of the saints, we have shared how God is at work in the world.

One of the problems with the modern Church is that we have forgotten how to tell our faith stories. We try very hard to catechize our children, but the Catholic faith is more than just memorizing statements about certain truths. The faith is more than simply absorbing and adopting a set of rules and regulations for life. As Popes Benedict and Francis keep reminding us, the Catholic faith is first and foremost about a living encounter with Christ the Lord.

Begin where you are

In any journey the place to start is where you are. That seems obvious, but we often look so far into the future with our dreams and ambitions that we fail to remember that everything great starts small. The place to start sharing your faith story is here and now.

A faith story needn't be some great miracle or spiritual success story. It might be a simple thanksgiving. When I was a boy, I went to a prayer meeting every Wednesday night. The pastor would invite anyone to speak, and each week one old fellow would stand up and, with tears in his eyes, say, “I just want to thank the Lord for my dear wife Flossie!” That's all. That was his faith story. It was powerful and memorable because it was from his heart, and it was real.

Talking about your faith may feel strange at first. That's because our faith is the most intimate part of our lives. You may be embarrassed and fear that your family and friends will mock you. They probably won't. Most people are longing to discuss their faith, and they will be grateful that you opened the subject. As you open up to share your faith, they will share theirs; in this way the faith spreads and grows.

Sharing faith stories is the simplest and most effective way to build up the Church and evangelise. Preachers, teachers, writers, and broadcasters do a good job, but the most effective evangelists are ordinary people who, like St. Andrew, meet Christ the Lord and then, with joy and enthusiasm, say to others, “Come and see!”

Fr. Dwight Longenecker is a priest of the Diocese of Charleston, USA. Read his blog, and browse his books at DwightLongenecker.com.

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November is the Month in which we especially remember our dear departed brothers and sisters.

Eternal rest, grant unto them O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.

May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God,
rest in peace. Amen.



**Apostleship
of the Sea**

Supporting Seafarers Worldwide

