

This month's letter is from Local Ministry Assistant Adrian Whalley

"The Journey Home"

In his poem, 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', W.B. Yeats pictures a man so consumed with longing for a home that, even in the middle of a busy street, all he hears is the sound of the lake – more real than the shadowy place where he is actually standing. What he longs for is a home of his imagination, on the Isle of Innisfree, where he can live in simplicity and peace. Direct similarities today?

The slow beat of the poem's last line shows us the man, standing stock still as the traffic flows around him, hearing the sound of the water of his dreams. Yeats did not, of course, abandon his literary life to live as a peasant by this lake, but the yearnings that he expressed for a true home for his 'deep hearts' core' is one that the readers of 1 Peter 1 vs 17-23 could easily understand. They, too, are standing in an alien land, longing for home.

But if they do not yet sit beside the lake, they are, at least, surrounded by their new family. 1 Peter reminds them that, although they are living in exile, they know whose children they are, and so they know what is required of them. They can call God 'Father', with unimaginable intimacy and, although they come from many backgrounds, they now know where they are going. For some unfathomable reason, God's great plan for the salvation of the world waited for them - the ragbag of scraps from goodness knows how many cultures - to be ready, so that they could come home together.

I just wonder how much of this we may be able to relate to ourselves – both as individuals and as members of this our community in Thornton and surrounds? Do we know whose children we are and so what is required of us to reflect in our daily lives?

Then there's the road to Emmaus story in Luke 24. Where are they going and why? Are they running away from the strange events in Jerusalem? Their most overwhelming need – greater even than their need for security or space, or whatever it is that set them off on the road to Emmaus – is the need to talk. They have to find some sense in what is going on – just, perhaps, as applies

to each of us right now! They have talked themselves round in circles so they turn eagerly to the stranger and the words pour out.

What on earth is going on? What can it mean? All their hopes of Jesus confounded and, with them, all they had come to believe about God and His purposes. And then these strange rumours about the body being missing, about angels, about life. Oh, what can it mean? They turn to the stranger.

Into their turmoil, the stranger – who is no stranger – speaks His words of rough and humorous revelation. And suddenly the road to Emmaus is the road home after all.

Adrian Whalley