

The resurrection story of the Road to Emmaus has many charming elements to it. Two disciples are presumably making their way home after the crushing disappointment of the crucifixion of Christ. Together they journey through apparent sadness, their faces downcast and Jesus walks with them.

There is a tradition that Cleopas is a female name. So this would be husband and wife moving on in the pilgrimage of life together.

There is so much reality and so much humility in this image. Modern romance has no place for such simplicity.

The thought that there could only be one person for me. The notion that the individual in love has arrived at perfection. The massive pressures placed upon individual relationship, which cannot possibly fulfil all our needs or desires.

These misconceptions are the result of both an inflated view of self, and the hidden desperation of the unloved.

The wife in the relationship has much to learn, much pain to be healed, much joy to be celebrated throughout the journey.

The husband in the relationship has much to give, much to be forgiven and a view of reality that will be transformed by circumstance throughout the journey.

The Roman Catholic view is not that when the vows are made the couple have arrived, but that they are beginning the journey to Emmaus together. Then in the confusion of the journey Christ will come and walk with them.

This image of pilgrimage is valid for so many situations. Children are often placed beyond the remit of reality. Thus talking to parents I often get the impression that all the pupils in our schools are above average intelligence. That up until the rebellion of adolescence pre-conceived ideas of their development affects expectation.

I have many nephews and nieces. I love each one of them, and follow closely their journey. Strangely it is often failure that has given. Learning to rise up, and begin again. Some have more than enough. But I no longer care as long as they have enough. Problems were often a result of my anxiety and not theirs.

I did want them to be successful. I now want them to be safe and happy.

To carry on with the journey, and to be surprised and find that as the path grows difficult that Christ is there walking beside them.

There is the mistaken investment in certainty. That fear will push me to live devoid of disaster.

But I don't know where I am going. I don't know where I am going.

Pilgrimage has taken this working class boy to a form of public school. To an education beyond what his dyslexia would generally allow. It has taken him into the homes and hearts of good people as a result of privileged ministry. It has journeyed through the dark clouds of depression, and the exultation of faith.

What is more the path I walk along goes on before me. On and on past Emmaus and possibly to Galilee.

However Just like Cleopas and her husband I turn and unrecognised by my appreciation there Christ walks beside me.

Your relationships are not a place of comfort but of journey

Your children move on

You cannot remain static

There is always the next step

Recognise the Christ who walks beside you

First step

Forward step

Step forward.