

Grace Notes *Friday, May 7, 2021*

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Dear friends:

Touched by the glow of a successful “Walk With Jesus”, this year entitled, “Journeying Together in Hope”, I found myself thinking again about some of the opportunities afforded us by technology during this lockdown which might be seen as silver linings. Looking at Tweets and other pictures of families walking together in their neighbourhoods – often with dogs – I realised that we had managed to broaden the experience to include many more students, and just as importantly their families, in an event which has only been able to accommodate a limited number of students and staff in the past. So let’s celebrate technology! Of course, there is still the need for a cadre of people to make this happen and a few who, like me, may have gained a few grey hairs in pulling this together. For those who may not have been able to participate, you can find all the files at [Journeying Together in Hope ~ Annual Walk with Jesus | Halton Catholic District School Board \(hcdsb.org\)](#).



Thanks to all who helped make this happen.

Father Con, our Vicar for Education, shared a beautiful message about how walking figures prominently in so many stories about Jesus. Walking wasn’t just the way to get from place A to place B, but also an opportunity to share and learn. We think particularly of the journey to Emmaus, when Jesus explained so much to the two disciples before they even realised who he was. I remember another story shared by Father Con, about a car trip to Quebec with his visiting teenaged niece and nephew which began with them “plugged in” to their devices and pretty much oblivious to each other. After he managed to entice them into conversation, it became a wonderful exchange where they all got to know each other so much better. As I think on occasions in my own family when everyone is focused on their choice of social media and the conversation seems to revolve around one or another Tweet, I’d love to go for a walk with them where there is no signal!

I remember with fondness my studies of the Canterbury Tales in a university course many years ago, and the amazing stories told by these twenty-nine pilgrims to keep

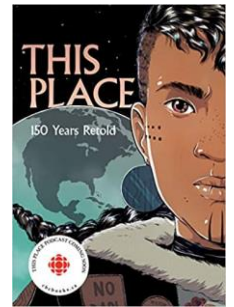
¹ Sculpture - Triumph by Timothy P. Schmalz



each other amused on the pilgrimage. In hearing of the virtues and vices of each of the storytellers, it may help to remember that they were on a pilgrimage to the tomb of St Thomas à Becket, whose gift was apparently the healing of the sinful! Although we may not consider these tales good catechetical material, “Whan that Aprill, with his shoures soote the droghte of March hath perced to the roote”² certainly sounds like the April which we have just left behind – and we Canadians are no different from people anywhere at sharing our stories of the year it snowed on the May 24th long weekend or whatever.

We are people of story: we treasure the stories of our heritage and culture, especially if we have come here from somewhere else, as the stories keep alive the memory of what we may have left behind. Stories also are a way to learn about where we are now and, told through Indigenous voices, often give us quite a different picture than one told by the newcomers.

Our faith is also one of story and Jesus, the teacher, knew how to use stories to their best advantage to teach. The value of his parables is often felt and recognised far beyond the faith context. I was going to include a link to the Song of the Body of Christ – which begins “We come to share our story...”; however, I discovered I was mistaken in its authorship and, out of deference to those who may have been victims of David Haas, have chosen not to do so. Not all the stories are happy ones.³ Instead I offer these older pieces:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XqSIMQaeAds> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhfpbhMqK6k>

So much of our story is told in song and the bardic tradition found in many cultures was the way to keep stories alive before we had both literacy and access to inexpensive printing methods. You may know ballads – or parts thereof – which tell stories, and that is a tradition that we continue to keep alive today. Think of “The Edmund Fitzgerald” or “Barrett’s Privateers”, or “Bobcaygeon”! With songs like these, “How can I keep from singing! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLPP3XmYxXg>

Wishing you a joyful week woven together with story and song,

Gillian

² The Canterbury Tales, General Prologue https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Prologue

³ Hamilton Diocese is one of those requesting of its musicians a moratorium at this time on the use of David Haas music due to charges pending against him.