

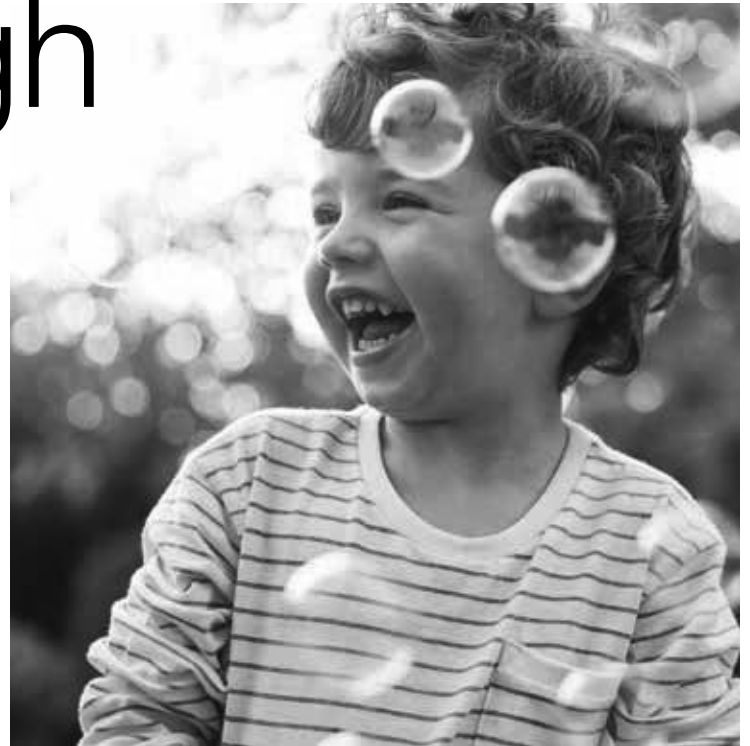
A good laugh

Gillian Cooper *reflects on* John 20:1-18

A fanfare would have been good, she thought later. Or a chorus of angels, perhaps. Something, anyway. If you're going to meet someone who was supposed to be dead, a little warning would be nice. Now she would go down in history as the woman who mistook him for the gardener, which made her look silly. And actually he had always been the silly one, with his sense of the ridiculous, his tendency to poke fun at the pompous and over-religious, his refusal to worry and plan. Perhaps, then, she shouldn't have

been surprised. It was typical of him. She knew he was dead. She'd been there through all the horror, had seen his body and watched as he was put in the tomb. She was not even close to coming to terms with his death. Just like him, then, to pop up in the garden saying her name. She had to admit, it was his best joke yet. She had to laugh, with him and at herself. Of course there was no fanfare, it wasn't his way.

In its place there was joy, deep at the heart of the universe, bubbling up into a laugh echoing through time and space. ☺



Lord Jesus Christ, alive and risen from the dead, you meet us in our need and call us by name. Help us to know the deep joy of resurrection life, to set our anxieties aside, and to sing your praise with laughter in our hearts. Amen.

Let us pray – ACTS of prayer

Part 1 – A is for adoration

by Kathryn Fleming

George Herbert describes prayer as breath: "God's breath in man returning to its birth." But my experience is that prayer often feels rather different; not an unconscious, constant rhythm that supports and shapes our days, but something far more demanding. We accept it as a necessity of faith, but it's often a struggle, maybe more duty than joy and, since we understand that prayer needs to be more than a kind of fractious shopping list, we've devised schemes to create a better balance.

One such is based on the acronym ACTS.

We begin at the beginning – A for Adoration – and so ensure we start with God. Our human instinct is to put self centre stage, but we start our prayer by focusing on God as God, not what God might do for us, not how we think our relationship might be. Simply God, "the vision of that endless perfectness". We forget the relentless clamour of the ego, always demanding attention, and allow God's beauty, beyond all words, to overwhelm us, so that our only word is "holy".

Kathryn is Sub Dean and Canon for Worship and Community at Coventry Cathedral. ☺

“ Let every man and woman count himself immortal. Let him catch the revelation of Jesus in his resurrection. Let him say not merely, 'Christ is risen,' but 'I shall rise.' ”

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), American Episcopal clergyman and author

A Lenten Camino

Part 8 – Alleluia!

by Sr Janet Fearn

A pilgrimage is a journey of self-discovery through finding and deepening a personal relationship with Jesus. That's why so many pilgrimages to Compostela do not end there. There's an inner need to symbolise a new dawn, a new life, a new beginning – so many people continue walking another four days until they reach the rocky coast of Finisterre.

Finisterre is symbolic of resurrection and Easter Sunday. The magnificent panorama towards the Atlantic has been, for many centuries, a shipping

hazard. Even when the sea is calm and at low tide, hidden rocks can catch sailors by surprise. The harbour hides an uncounted number of wrecks, some centuries old. Yet there is a lighthouse to warn of danger, providing hope of life and survival.

Many pilgrims abandon their footwear at Finisterre to symbolise the new path they are taking. Today is, for me, a start of my new Camino through life. How am I planning to begin?

Buen Camino!

Sr Janet's book, A Lenten Camino, is available from Redemptorist Publications as an e-book: www.rpbooks.co.uk/a-lenten-camino ☺