

Homily. 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.C. 20/21 July 2019.

I was in Grade 5 at the local Brothers School when at our morning assembly we were told that everyone who had someone to go home to should do so as man was expected to walk upon the Moon. Like most I got my bag, jumped on my push bike excitedly rode the 15 minutes or so home to Mum, Dad of course being at work. On a day much like today we snuggled up on the 3 seater lounge giving our full attention to the black and white images beaming into our lovely furniture-cased Healing TV. Just a few minutes before 1.00pm we saw Armstrong take the 1st human steps on the Lunar surface and heard him say his now immortal words.

50 years is a big chunk out of our short lives, but it's a mere blink in the history of our species and nothing at all in the even longer history of the solar system and the universe. Yet, what happened 50 years ago is significant nevertheless. It marked the first steps we've taken beyond this rare, possibly unique and beautiful blue world of life into the cold and dark of space and all that lies above our skies. This 50th anniversary honours the courage of all of those women and men who made that great journey possible while celebrating our deep human desire to search the unknown bringing it into the light of our knowledge and understanding.

About 3,800 years ago when Abraham was met by the 3 Divine visitors he realised that he was encountering great mystery revealing some of itself to him. He was awed by what was happening, greeting this unexpected event with excitement, warmth, hospitality and all of his attention.

The result was their promise to return in a year and the gift of a son who would carry God's promise into the next generation. This son was Isaac, who then fathered Jacob also known as Israel. From Jacob came the 12 boys beginning the 12 tribes of Israel, the people of God. The Abraham meeting was the next step on that journey of faith, continuing today in all of us who have confidence in the wondrous love and mercy of God.

When Jesus dropped by at Bethany to visit His 2 friends, Martha and Mary, He came so as to bring them further and deeper into the mystery of God's loving plan. Martha became anxious and distracted by all that she thought she had to do, while Mary sat still, listening with all of her mind and heart to what Jesus was saying. It was Martha who complained wanting Mary to tear herself away from what she was doing and get herself involved in the kitchen work. This, as Jesus said, was not to happen for Mary had chosen the better part of His visitation. She had chosen to be fully present as Jesus offered the loving words of life.

Our own lives are often torn in two by this choice. We're busy to the point of distraction missing the mystery of God who is with us at every moment of our journey through life. Our focus becomes unclear and our attention dissipated as we glide and bump over one thing and onto the next. If this anniversary does nothing else let it remind us that it took the total attention and undivided focus of thousands across the world to get us onto the Moon and safely back.

It took enormous concentration, ingenuity and effort to bring that 9 year old boy and his mother sitting on their couch in Maryborough the black and white TV images and voices of Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin from

the surface of a strange new world, while Michael Collins orbited above them and over all of us. The ongoing human journey into the great mystery we've been destined to welcome and explore takes this degree of listening and this amount of undivided attention so that our faith might be confirmed and our hopes realised. I think that of all the insights that the last 50 years have brought us this could be the most telling of them all; to focus, to listen and to co-operate as one family so that our human journey together brings us all of the rewards it promises.