

I'm so grateful that in my late teens the Lord called me into His Church; and one of the reasons is that it's a Church that doesn't forget its past.

Today, so it seems, many individuals, and institutions think that the past has nothing to teach us.

Let's throw it out, and adopt the latest passing trend or fashion in society; in that way we'll be able to engage with people, and become 'relevant.'

A band from my youth, 'The Kinks,' recorded a song called 'Dedicated Follower Of Fashion. A parody on people in the 1960's who let the latest whim or fancy blow them this way and that.

It's as pertinent today as it was back then: certainly in society at large and also, to some extent, amongst Christians of all persuasions who seem to: "Reject the truth and chase after myths." 1 Tim. 4: 4

But: "Our faith is not born from a myth or an idea, but from an encounter with the Risen One, in the life of the Church." Pope Benedict XVI: General Audience Sept. 24 2008

Christianity is built on the foundations of historical events that happened in time, and yet rooted in eternity: this gives it its vitality, its energy, its life.

These two foundational pillars – history and eternity – are at the heart of our Scripture readings today.

Stories like the Lord feeding His people in the wilderness in the reading from Exodus.

It was to be told over and over again to each generation so that they would understand that God acted for them in history, is acting for them now, and will for eternity.

"I will utter hidden things, things from of old – things we have heard and known. [the Psalmist says] We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done." Ps. 77 (78): 2 – 4

History, the present, the future, and eternity are held safe in the Lord's: "Everlasting arms." Dt. 33: 27

Life has a purpose: we must not, as Paul says in Ephesians: "Go on living the aimless kind of life that pagans live. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy. Eph. 4: 17, 23 – 24

This is what happened to us when, at a specific point in history, we were Baptised, and subsequently Confirmed.

But those historical moments in our lives prepare us for eternity: eternal life in the Lord; now, and in the life beyond death.

The source and summit of the Christian life is the Eucharist.

So very ordinary looking, with the simple ingredients of bread and wine; and yet, it's where history, time, and eternity meet.

Jesus says: "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." Jn. 6: 32 – 33

All those centuries ago it seemed that Moses was giving you manna, bread from heaven, to eat.

My Father gave you that bread to sustain you bodily: now my Father gives you the true bread, the living bread.

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.” Jn. 6: 35

Do you recall in Luke’s Gospel the two disciples Jesus meets on the day of His Resurrection on the way to Emmaus?

Jesus listens to these distraught people with a gracious intensity as they tell Him, with sadness written across their faces, of their doubts, and fears because of the death of their Lord.

But then Jesus says – and I’m sure He said it with a gentle healing smile: “You foolish people! So slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” Lk. 24: 25 – 26
As they carry on walking, He opens up the Scriptures to them, but He talks about them in a completely new way.

Then, Jesus sits down in the house in Emmaus to eat with them; He says the prayer of blessing, and breaks the bread.

It’s a moment out of time brought into time: they think back – they remember the Last Supper – this is my body, broken for you; this is my blood shed for you.

And, at that moment, what Jesus said to them on the road merges with the breaking of bread.

They see with absolute clarity that the death of Jesus doesn’t end in a cold, dark tomb. It led through death to life – the Bread of Life: not to a tomb, but to a table of sacrifice where history, time, and eternity meet in bread and wine.

“Jesus Christ; the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Heb. 13: 8

Afterwards: “They said to each other, ‘Didn’t our hearts burn within us?’” Lk. 24: 32

Do your hearts burn within you when you hear the Scriptures, and receive the Bread of Life at the Eucharist?

If not, I wonder why?

Jesus says: “Don’t be so concerned about perishable things. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I alone can give.” Jn. 6: 27