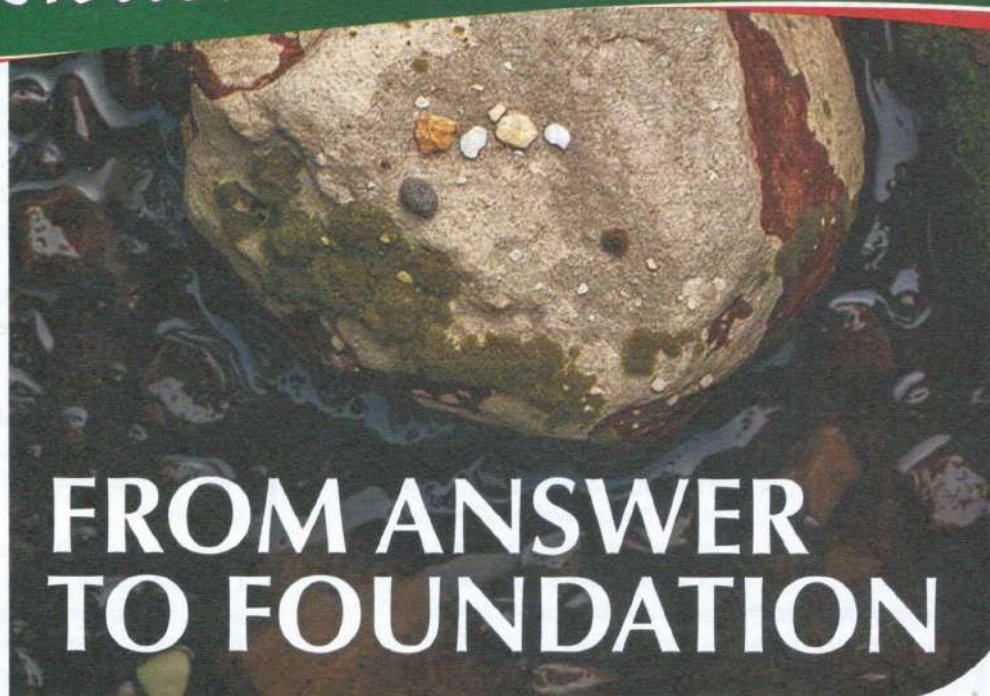


We talk these days more of 'nurturing' faith rather than of passing or handing it on — and I believe this to be a better fit or a more appropriate term. Faith is a quality that is enduring and ever-new. It has to wear the modern clothes of these times. There is some evidence to show a counter-cultural return to faith amongst the young, and in some cases the return is more among males than females. Some point to a wish to be different from a culture that they have rejected. Perhaps others realise that the badge 'Christian' is more than a box to be ticked on the census form under 'religious preference' — it is something far deeper. While many attack the teachings of faith, few pause to reflect on the person of Jesus Christ and who Christ is for us.

But faith has to move from being an inheritance to something personally worn — from being a commodity to being part of our very core. It's not down to what others say, what culture says — it's what YOU say. The winds of doubt will always blow around you, but there needs to be a still core in our heart that knows its answer. Faith — like Peter — is rock-like, steady



FROM ANSWER TO FOUNDATION

and enduring. St Patrick of Ireland described himself as being like a stone lying in deep mud, but raised up by the grace of God. Isn't that our call also? To build bridges across fear, across uncertainty across every shadow that comes to obscure the light? The question 'Who do you say that I am?' echoes down the corridors of time. Why? Because it is about faith and faith means relationship and, like all relationships, there is no fixed state or answer. The question asked by Jesus is not about seeking the 'right' answer from us — the point is to stay with that open question and answer it in every age and circumstance of our lives. In our twenties we tend to answer

'Who do you say I am?' on the basis of title and meaning. In mid-life, honed by the joys and sorrows of life, our answer comes from suffering. In our later years we may respond from a perspective of hope or of letting go. We should never be complacent about faith. It is a precious inheritance or a gift we can pray for. Don't be like Shebna in the First Reading, who presumed on his status and was deposed as prophesied. Answer humbly and Jesus will raise you up.

— Tom Cox

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, ...
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Lord Jesus Christ, ... **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins ...

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon (Cf. Ps 103:13-15)

The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord;

you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

Prayer after Communion

Complete within us, O Lord, we pray, the healing work of your mercy and graciously perfect and sustain us, so that in all things we may please you.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reflection

What are your favourite titles for Jesus?

Lesson

Like Peter, our faith can be strengthened by faults and doubts along the road.

Prayer

You are the Christ, the Son of God.
Help me to understand what I profess.