

WRITERS' BLOCK & FRIENDS

We know the experience of sitting down to write a letter to someone that requires a bit of special care and attention and we can't quite find the words. In the same way when we want to write a poem, a song, a homily or a speech and can't find the words, we feel a bit frustrated, silly and inadequate.

Sometimes we are in a conversation and can't find the right words to respond to the person speaking with us and we stumble around trying to make an adequate reply to something the other person has said.

A family crisis occurs and we are called on to be present, to support, and then we are confronted with a sense of your own broken self and wonder what use we can be in this situation.

It happens to all of us at some time that we are called on to perform a task that is confronting which seems to be beyond our ability.

There are some classic instances of this experience in the Scriptures. Jeremiah's call from God is a lovely human encounter with the divine, in which Jeremiah wonders what on earth God could want with him. "What do you want with me, I am just a child". God reassures him that he will give Jeremiah all the help he needs and we're still telling his story all these centuries later!

When we're stretched beyond where we've been before, our inadequacies, our fears, our sinful self confronts us and we feel we are therefore not up to the task being asked of us.

The beauty of our Catholic faith is that we know an utter trust in God's mercy and the power of that mercy to cut through all our hesitations and failures in order that we might be of good service to each other even when all our shortcomings come into focus. Mercy picks us up with all our broken pieces in one loving motion and reassures us that we are loved and that there is much to learn from our broken selves. Our mistakes, our sins, our shortcomings shouldn't be wasted! They are so often the places of our best learning and growth.

We come to learn that the mission of the gospel to which we are all called through our baptism, is all about our own transformation as well as the healing, support or love that others need from us.

Once we begin to realise that we are not alone, that everyone has his or her version of a broken self, and that Jesus himself has shared our broken self in his suffering on the Cross, then we can rise to any challenge.

Rising from the dead can become part of our daily routine when we live consciously in God's presence. Our failures, our sins, our shortcomings will all still be there. They will still interrupt us, but they will never again be able to dictate our response when we are called to give of ourselves to others.

May writers' block and all its companions, never again shape our attitudes, our actions or our freedom.

Father Kevin