

SUNDAY

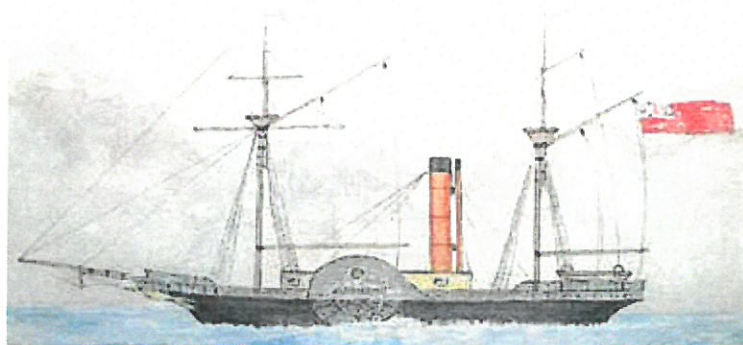
PLUS



“Who hath desired the Sea?”

A Year of the Word

A heroine of the seas



Image/ 19th century folk art watercolour of SS Forfarshire/ wikimedia commons.

by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Just below the Scottish border lie a group of low islands, called the Farne Islands. These islands were once home to ascetic Christian monks who favoured remote islands for quiet and meditation. St Cuthbert, patron saint of Northumbria, retreated there after his missionary work in the seventh century. The outermost islands were always shipping hazards, especially during storms. Rising at dawn on 7 September 1838, Grace Darling, daughter of the lighthouse keeper, looked out of her window at a howling gale and saw a wreck on a low rocky island about 600 yards away. The ship was a paddle steamer, the Forfarshire.

The storm snapped the boat in two, taking many people with it. The surviving passengers eventually struggled onto the rocks of the island. This was the sight that Grace, twenty-three years old, saw

that stormy morning. She counted thirteen people huddled on the rocks. Running to her father, she begged him to take out their boat and rescue them. At first he said the seas were too rough to venture out with just the two of them. After further pleading he agreed. By the time they arrived only nine people were left – the sea had swept away four of the original survivors.

It was an extraordinary act of bravery, where two people risked their lives to rescue strangers in danger. Grace's compulsion to save others was a stronger instinct than her own safety and survival. In her own way she reflects the commitment and tenacity of Jesus. Today we pray for all those brave women and men who risk their lives to save others at sea.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Wave wonder

by Mary Bell

As people grow old many years to live by the sea. Perhaps it is a harking back to childhood holidays on sandy shores or perhaps there is a fundamental pull exerted in us all from primeval longings. Whatever the case, just gazing at the sea can be mesmerising; experiencing its moods – the sparkling sunlit waves or the tempestuous hurling on rocks and wondrous foam shooting skywards.

Our faith is like that: sometimes broad and strong like the tide at high water, at others receding in pools of doubt and pebbly stretches of sharp recriminations “How could God let that happen?”

Most of the time we probably take them for granted – our faith and the sea – just there, twinkling and heaving, now this way, now that, until we are confronted by the realisation, as St Paul says, that there is somewhere even more glorious awaiting us. This is truly our faith.

Mary Bell is a retired teacher, U3A lecturer and devoted grandmother.

Start with the children

by Rachel Thompson

I was mortified to be greeted by, “I’ll be in at 9 o’clock to complain!”, as I arrived at school at 4 am. Unfortunately, while waiting for the coach to London, our noisily overexcited CAFOD group had woken children in a neighbouring house.

We had been preparing for weeks for our trip to join the mass lobby of Parliament with The Climate Coalition. Young people clearly recognise our climate crisis. They are horrified by the damage to wildlife in oceans choking in plastic. They see the poorest communities already suffering from the effects of global warming and want to stop this injustice. The seed has fallen on good soil. They have heard and understood that faith

in a God of love demands action on behalf of the voiceless.

As I think back to the lobby now, however, I wonder if our message has been heard loudly enough. Perhaps we should all be encouraging even more noise.

Whilst working as Redemptorist Publications' Children's Editor, Rachel Thompson is also a secondary school teacher, wife and mum.

**Lord of life and love,
be with all seafarers
and bring them
home safely to their
families. Please
also watch over
and protect lifeboat
crews, lifeguards and
all those who devote
their time and energy
to keeping people
safe. Amen.**

“Today is ‘Sea Sunday’. I direct my thoughts to sailors, fishermen and their families. I call upon Christian communities, coastal communities in particular, to be attentive and considerate to them. I ask the chaplains and volunteers of the Apostleship of the Sea to continue their commitment in the pastoral care of these brothers and sisters. I entrust all of them, especially those who are in difficulty and far from home, to the motherly protection of Mary, Star of the Sea.”

Pope Francis

Today:
Isaiah 55:10-11
Romans 8:18-23
Matthew 13:1-23

Monday:
Isaiah 1:10-17
Matthew 10:34 – 11:1

Tuesday:
Isaiah 7:1-9
Matthew 11:20-24

Wednesday:
Isaiah 10:5-7, 13-16
Matthew 11:25-27

Thursday:
Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19
Matthew 11:28-30

Friday:
Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8
Matthew 12:1-8

Saturday:
Micah 2:1-5
Matthew 12:14-21

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 12:13, 16-19
Romans 8:26-27
Matthew 13:24-43

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