

thought he said: 'Have you done all the seven deadly sins?' And I was thinking, well – [laughter] But then – it was one of those moments when you think: oh, I can't remember all the seven sacraments – it was a terrible moment! But I think I managed to, sort of, say something about baptism, and how wonderful I thought that was. But then I thought about it afterwards, and I thought: yes, I'm very privileged as a bishop. I *have* done all the seven sacraments, which include confirmation and ordination. And, before a confirmation, we ask people to write a brief biography of themselves – why are they coming to this day? And I'm often so humbled and moved that these people have really been touched by Christ, and turned by him – in, in sort of, massive examples. Often, in the midst of massive tragedy, something's clicked. And their faith in Christ has come alive – and it's turned their lives around. So, I'm very privileged. I did a confirmation this morning, before we met up. And I'm just so privileged to come across all these people who, not only have been touched by Christ, and been turned around by Christ – but they want to stand up at the front of a church and proclaim that. God bless them.

I asked the contributors whether they've ever experienced this – being turned round.

Denise: No, I haven't.

Neil: I've experienced many miracles in my life but it's only with hindsight and looking back that I realise that it was God and Jesus working in that situation, and working that through.

Vicky: Twelve years ago I suppose it must have been now, when I – we were having trouble trying to conceive. And I prayed a lot and we ended up with two lovely, healthy babies – so, yeah, turned round big style, yeah, definitely. I do think we're blessed, and – and that was a real answer to my prayers.

[55] *Let's go back to the disciples and the followers of Jesus who met him in a variety of places; heard his voice in the garden; in the breaking of bread, and so on. Where might we expect to hear the voice of Jesus?*

DW: Put the question another way: where might we not expect to hear the voice of Jesus? And I think the Easter story has him breaking out and breaking in everywhere. Through locked doors – getting the enviable habit of bi-location or multi-location. He springs from the tomb and is everywhere. And after Pentecost his spirit is everywhere throughout the world – local and international. So, 'where might we not hear the voice of Jesus?' is probably a better question. And of course, yes there's all the obvious answers as you read the Gospels. I've always loved the Gospels since I was, sort of, knee-high really. And Jesus speaks very powerfully to me through them. And has spoken powerfully for 2,000 years, in all sorts of different contexts – different cultures. The Eucharist – my tradition – is that Jesus, the crucified and risen Jesus, is very strong there in the breaking of the bread. He took; he blessed; he broke and he gave. The church, of course – people hear the voice of Jesus in church. Through others – just attend to others. And stop rushing around and missing others. And in others, you see the other-ness of Christ. So many examples. You see both the crucified and the resurrected. And, yeah – music, art, literature. I find my Christ squatting hoof and mouth under every bush. But then my wife says I'm obsessed with him [laughing]! But that's the thing, isn't it really – to be obsessed with Christ, and expect to be surprised by him. The thing I've loved most about my ministry is work in schools. I always thought I'd be rubbish at it, and was very nervous when I first went into a school. And I remember, it was near Middlesbrough and everybody walked in – marched in, with arms swinging by

their sides – that was just the teachers! It was a very disciplined school. And I was a gibbering wreck. But since then I've gone into so, so many schools and – I don't see myself as going in as an expert, an expert on the Christian faith – I rather see myself going in as a detective, seeking Christ. And that's a very different world view. I don't think I'm taking Christ into school, I think: where can I find Christ here? And it's amazing to be surprised. And humbling. And not just schools, anywhere really. Go out as a detective. We're all Morses, Lewises, Hathaways, at the end of a day.

[56] *I wonder what our contributors thought about this.*

Denise: Where? In church, I guess. When? When you talk to him.

Vicky: I think he knows if – when you have dark times and you're praying, and sometimes you'll, you'll hear a voice back. And just have, maybe, some sort of clarity in your mind all of a sudden, about what you have to do, and what you need to do, and which direction you need to go in.

Neil: You can hear it in, in many different situations. You can hear it in nature. You can hear it in – in the news. You can hear it in stories of compassion. You can also hear it in talking to friends and colleagues and fellow Christians.

[57] *I guess the great thing about the voice of Jesus is that – is that he never gives up on speaking to us and calling us. And I think you've found this to be true, haven't you?*

DW: Yes. I've got many saints who've been a particular inspiration for me. One is a guy, who was Bishop of Winchester

in the seventeenth-century, called Lancelot Andrewes. And I think his Christmas sermon at Winchester in the seventeenth-century was one on which T S Eliot based his famous poem the Journey of the Magi – the cold coming they had of it. But Lancelot Andrewes wrote loads of prayers, – one of which – a phrase has stayed with me: 'for calling, recalling and further recalling manifold, thanks be to God.' God never gives up. Christ never gives up trying to turn us, with his voice. And I am so grateful he has never given up on me, and keeps on trying.

[58] *Thank you so much. I'm going to give the last word, this time, to – to our contributors.*

Denise: I have found it to be true. Because I think, when I gave up on him, he sent Neil to me [laughing]. So he didn't give up on me.

Vicky: Yeah, I did definitely give up on him, sort of – in my teen years and my early – early twenties / thirties. But, you know, sort of mid-thirties went back to – came back to him. And, you know, he was still there. He's constant.

Neil: Ever since I've become a Christian, I've never felt that he will ever give up on me, or – or will ever let me go. I'm his and that's that.