

This week the family and I went on a journey down to Sydney. We drove the New England highway. It was long, we didn't know what to expect and we were delighted at the beauty we saw along the way. After being in Australia for eleven years, it was wonderful to finally see some of the country... besides South-East Queensland.

Waking up to frost in Armidale took Juliana and I back to fond childhood memories. Connor and Victoria were fascinated by crunchy grass and the ice formations on the car.

The journey down to Sydney, included stops and starts, rest and refuelling, an interesting back road called Bylong Valley Way, which was secluded, a bit rough and weaved its way through a pretty tough Australian wilderness.

On reflection, there are points of this trip, which echo my own journey in faith. Ironically, we were doing this trip because God called me to serve Him and his Church.

I am happy to say I have now graduated from Charles Sturt University with a Bachelor of Theology, which is one of the requirements for Ordination in this Diocese.

This was not an easy thing, and obtaining a degree was never something that I was either encouraged to do by educators, or made to feel as though I could do it.

I have dyslexia which means that reading, writing, spelling and sometimes comprehension and processing new information can present challenges for me.

Yet as I started to grow in faith and travel along the road of accepting who I am in Christ, and who God made me to be,

And through God's grace, the help and support from my lovely wife, I have achieved things beyond anything I could have imagined.

Last week Steve announced that I will be ordained a Priest this December. Growing up I never had any inkling that this is what I would be doing, I thought that being a Chief sounded like a pretty good idea... I like good food.

But the thing is, when we have faith, in the faith that God has in us, we begin to realise that sometimes we are being drawn into something else. Something that is not of ourselves, but of God.

When we start feeling this pull and respond to it... we begin our vocation – being what we are called to be, to go deeper, to look within, listen to God and discover who we are, and who he calls us to be as his disciple.

A vocation is more than a person wearing a collar... Each and every one of us has a vocation, God is calling each of us to something. No matter how old or young at heart you are God is calling.

In today's readings – each focus on God's call. Moses is set apart and saved as an infant for the expected call on his life and the purpose God has for him in leading the Israelite people out of Egypt. Jesus places the mantle of building the Church upon Peter in the Gospel. But it is Paul to the Romans who tells us that everyone has a vocation.

Paul says that to each we have “the measure of faith that God has assigned”. So, through God, each of us has faith that is given by God, each of us has a different amount of faith. This is because we are each on our own journey and walk with God, and through that journey is where our faith grows.

So, the faith you have may be more or less than the person sitting beside you. But the thing is, how much faith we have compared to the other person does not matter. Because together, despite our differences and where we are with God, we form the body of Christ – The Church. As Paul said, “individually we are members of one another”

God's grace equips God's people –some to teach, some to give, some to lead, some to care, and some to proclaim Christ.

So, if we identify as been Christian – it also means that we are called to do something.

All those that are Baptised and confirmed are called to study the bible, take part in the life of the church, to take part in Holy Communion, to pray faithfully and regularly, we are called to share with others by word and example, the love of Christ and his Gospel of reconciliation and hope, we are called to love our neighbours as ourselves, to honour all people and to pray and work for peace and justice.

Vocation is an adventure, the journey we have with God is exciting but can also be unnerving– sometimes we get to see all the beauty, other times we may not know what is around the corner – a straight run or rougher road...

The Methodists have a prayer which expresses an openness to God's call. It goes like this:

'I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or brought low for you; let me be full, let me be empty, let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.'

So I challenge us all today to spend time in prayer, listen to God and discern your vocation and how or if you are responding to God's call on your life.