

# Share Your Story!

ECUMENICAL  
BIBLE WEEK

9<sup>TH</sup> - 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019



ALWAYS BE READY

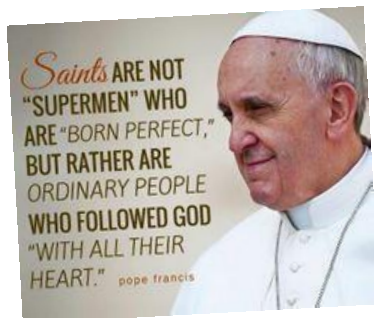
TO GIVE AN ANSWER... FOR THE HOPE THAT YOU POSSESS

1 PETER 3:15

*We may wonder at times why people aren't turned on by our stories, our ministry, and why the young aren't interested in whom we are and what we do. Did we ever stop to think that maybe part of the reason is that we aren't telling our story in the right way, or maybe not at all? We are encouraged to tell our faith story, share our journey of faith. As Christians one thing we tend to get embarrassed, almost apologetic about and often shy away from is sharing our faith story.*

***Our stories, your story of faith is important – find space to share them!!***

Stories shape and colour the fabric of our lives. Narratives associated with our family traditions, experiences with good friends, and pivotal events in our personal development help provide frameworks of meaning for us. When older people regale us with stories of the “old days” they are making memory of events that have given meaning to their lives. As we recount past glories, the events are memorialized and re-presented. Important stories shape our vision of life – our perspective on where we come from and where we are headed, our sense of identity as individuals and a community, and our convictions about what is truly valuable. We are story-laden people.



David Power, a well-known sacramental theologian, talks about the power of story within the context of the liturgy (*The Eucharistic Mystery*, 304-316). Power says, “It is by the power of language that events are represented and transform reality.” He discusses what he calls “foundational narratives.” Power observes, “It is from these [foundational narratives] that communities draw their vigour, in reference to them that they express the horizon within which they live. As the life of a community develops over time, new events are illumined by their relation to the foundational narrative.”

As Christians, our foundational narrative is the story of Jesus. We are people who tell the story of Jesus and who treasure that story, striving to allow it more and more to become the guiding vision in our lives. Events in our lives are illumined by relating them to the foundational narrative of God’s loving self-gift in Jesus. We draw our vigour for life by dwelling within that story and allowing it to slowly transform us, to shape the ways in which we see and act. We want the gospel to form the horizon within which we live. That said there is a saying in Ireland that if you want to kill a conversation in the pub talk about one of these three topics - *death, politics or religion!!*

## **WHY is telling your story important?**

Stories are important, not only to those from other cultures, but to each one of us. Aristotle said, “We are what we repeatedly do.” If this is true, our story is who we are and our means of connecting with others at a deeper level.

You might think, “I can’t tell a story”, but according to *Whoever Tells the Best Story Wins* by Annette Simmons, “Most of the time you don’t even realize you are telling stories...We tell stories about how stressed we are, how stupid some people are, and how no one on earth has ever had an airplane/airport experience worse than we have....you need to vent (frustrations) by telling stories...”

Take confidence in the fact that first set of instructions for an “elevator speech” was written in the New Testament! -

*Now who is going to harm you if you are enthusiastic for what is good? But even if you should suffer because of righteousness, blessed are you. Do not be afraid or terrified with fear of them, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who*

**Your story is  
the key that  
can unlock  
someone else's  
prison. Share  
your testimony.**

*Spiritual Inspiration*

*λογος μαρτυριου*



*asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence, keeping your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who defame your good conduct in Christ may themselves be put to shame. 1Peter 3:13-16*

Certainly, in the sharing our story, we risk making ourselves vulnerable. There is risk in revealing a degree of who we are authentically, in our struggles and doubts as well as in our accomplishments and hopes. But such intimate sharing, given and received, can potentially help us to feel more invested in one another, more trusting, more personally gifted, and less alone. We can share and celebrate our Good News! ***Maybe begin the practice, at each parish, group, sacramental or deanery meeting, of taking time for two or three members to tell us about their path, about their journey, their faith, their story.***

### **How to tell your story?**

There are many ways to share your story but one simple example is to copy the Apostle Paul. Saint Paul's testimony followed a three-part pattern:

1. His life before Christ, before faith – *his pedigree*
2. How he encountered Christ, when he recognized God in his life – *falling down, bright lights, blindness*
3. What has happened since, recognizing God in his life since and the difference this has made – *Acts of the Apostles*

We all have a story to tell. No one ended up where they are today in an instant. "Let me tell you the difference faith makes to my life ... (*job, marriage, relationships, opinions, feelings, etc.*)". But remember not to give the impression when we tell our stories that we are telling others that they are wrong.

### **Tell Your Story!!**

OK, so now, it's time for you to tell your story.

One story to start with is the time when you realized that you *owned* your religion—when your faith/religion was something you believed yourself, not because your parents or anyone else told you. Use the questions and the space provided below to gather your ideas prior to sharing.

### ***Start like Paul....***

1. What my life was like before I owned my religion, before I owned my faith:
  
2. What happened (*event, realization, learning, etc....*) to make religion mine:
  
3. How is life now? – what changed, what difference does your faith make, what happened since:

**Finally, the best part, turn to the person next to you and share your story!**