

SoulSpace

SERIES: GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

Season colour: **WHITE**

In this series, **Jim Deeds** finds evidence of the divine in the ordinary and extraordinary events of every day.

After I left school, I went to university... for a while. Looking back, it wasn't the right time for me, and I ended up leaving the course I had started. I was young and on the dole. It was 1991, and there weren't many jobs about, so I fell back on one of the few life skills I had developed – playing music. I'd been playing the guitar for some years and had become good enough to carry a tune. I decided I'd go busking in Belfast city centre to supplement my dole money.

Back then, the police had the habit of telling buskers to move on. Often, a police officer would ask me if I had a busking licence (which I didn't. I had no idea where to get one and no inclination to get one either). Upon being told I didn't have said licence, the officer would say, "You'll have to move on," or something similar. And off I'd move... to another busking spot.

One day, I was singing a song called "Johnny B. Goode" by Chuck Berry. Midway through the second verse, I saw a police patrol rounding the corner. In those days, police patrolled in fours. I looked the other way, hoping they'd pay me no attention. After a few more bars of the song, I saw that one of them had fixed me in his gaze. He had broken away from his colleagues and was coming towards me. My heart sank. He was going to move me on. I had been making a few pounds and having fun. Now it was over. I wouldn't be able to find another good spot and would have to go home. I continued singing, but my voice lost the enthusiasm of only a minute before. In ways, I was already on the bus home.

The officer came closer and closer until he was right beside me. He leaned towards me and said out of the corner of his mouth,

"What's the chords of that song? I've always wanted to play it."

"A-D-E," I said, a little unsure of what I was hearing but with a smile forming on my face.

"Thanks," he said and winked at me, before rejoining his colleagues and walking off.

Relieved, I figuratively got off the bus home and

was present to the moment and the music. My voice strengthened, and I got back into the joy of the music. My gloomy prediction had been both inaccurate and unhelpful.

PREDICTING THE WORST

I'm reminded of that story because it sums up how I can be a lot of the time. I decide how a situation will work out or how someone will behave before anything even happens. And when I do, I often imagine the worst possible outcome, like that day when I was busking. I judged how the police officer would react to me and had already moved myself on with my day ruined when if I had stayed in the moment, I wouldn't have had to worry at all.

I'm not saying all situations work out well. But I wonder if, at times, we worry needlessly because we rush to judgement or to predict outcomes. I think Jesus knew we could be like that. He had words he often spoke of immense help when we are worried or fear the worst: "Peace be with you." Indeed, we have enshrined Jesus's desire for us to experience peace into the words of the Mass: "Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will."

It strikes me another keyword in this particular prayer is 'faith.'

So, why not decide today to practice staying in the present moment and in faith, to allow the peace of the Lord to wash over you? By doing so, we could allow whatever comes at us to be what it is. We might even be pleasantly surprised.

I'm off to play Johnny B. Goode! ■

series ends



Today's readings

Dan 7:13-14

Apoc 1:5-8

Jn 18:33-37

GOD'S WORD TODAY

This is a tremendous feast with which to end the liturgical year because it turns upside down all the pre-conceived ideas we have about hierarchy, kingship and what it means to be in authority. It is not simply that Jesus is talking about a different place. He is talking about a different way of living, one that is not about control or power but love and service.



DON'T WORRY, BE HAPPY

Rather than worrying unnecessarily, try to live in the present moment, inviting the peace of the Risen Lord to wash over you.

