

Thresholds of possibility.

Old Freddie Gilroy sits on a bench and quietly looks out to sea. His face is craggy and his shoe laces are undone. He holds a cigarette in his hand as he watches the world go by and I have fallen for him.

I am talking about the large steel sculpture by the artist Ray Lonsdale that has recently arrived on the North Bay at Scarborough. The wonderful work of art is called, 'Freddie Gilroy and the Belsen Stragglers' and is based on a retired miner friend of the sculptor. Freddie was a very ordinary man who revealed to Ray that he was one of the first soldiers to relieve the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp at the end of World War II. The artist says that the sculpture represents all the normal people that were pulled out of an ordinary life and forced into a very extraordinary one during the World Wars.



The sculpture of Freddie sits on the threshold of where the sea meets the land. This is an exciting place to be. The Irish poet John O'Donohue says that this threshold is,

'The place where absolute change rushes against still permanence, where the urgency of Becoming confronts the stillness of Being, where restless desire meets the silence and serenity of stone.'

A walk along the sea shore is good for us all. It blows away the cobwebs and it brings perspective and balance too. But it does more than this. It is in such places as this that our hearts can be stirred. As the wild divinity of the sea infuses the shore with its secrets, our hearts too become more open to the dreams of our creator for us and of the possibilities that we hold deep within. At the core of our faith is the call to live more fully these possibilities.



Seeing the statue of Freddie for the first time on New Year's Day really made me think. Like him, I am a normal person living an ordinary life. Yet, his courage and strength show us that ordinary lives can shine. So what are my hidden talents and possibilities? At the threshold of this New Year am I really capable of the fresh start, of the new growth and of the deepening of my faith that I want so much?

Yes I am. My learning heart is beginning to see that when we can recognise our gifts and talents and use them, then we can begin to live our lives more fully. Jesus tells us that, 'I came that they might have life, life in all its fullness.' John 10:10 .

So where do I start? I have decided to start with love - to try and love more fully. Love is at the heart of authentic, human living. Every little face washed, every meal prepared, every load of washing hung out, every phone call made, every lesson taught, every trip to the shops, every smile given, every sorry said are all examples of, 'Love in action' in my daily life. When I mindfully hold love at the centre of all that I do, when I surround those around me with love, when I bring love to all the difficult situations in my life then I am living the life that I was born to live. I am living the dreams that my creator has for me. I am living on the threshold of where divine and human presence ebb and flow.