

My postcard is a photograph I took from the Isles of Scilly.

They sound exotic don't they? Long empty white beaches, crystal clear sea, palm trees... The islands really are beautiful but being about 40km off the Cornish coast they don't reflect the tropical temperatures of the Caribbean!

The weather is typically unpredictable – it can be lovely and warm but it can also be wet and windy... Although the gulf stream warms the air currents, it completely misses the sea, so swimming in the sea is only for the hardy.

The Isles of Scilly are a thin place for me because they remind me that I am not in control. I hate this but it teaches me again and again what it means to rely on God's grace.

The theme for Greenbelt this weekend is "Wild at Home" and this summarises my experience of being on the Scilly Isles. There's something very wild about being on little more than an outcrop of rock surrounded by the ocean. There's something very wild, and at times quite threatening, about being at the mercy of the wind and the waves; but there's also something wild about being so close to nature that, as a visitor, I have time to appreciate the flowers and the birds. My great aunt, who lived on Scilly, took it upon herself to illustrate the encyclopaedia of wild flowers, which meant finding each and every one of them first!

But being close to the wild-side of the islands also makes me appreciate what it means to be at home. When you've been caught in a storm, either out walking or on the open sea heading back from one of the off-islands, the solidity of stone walls and a floor that isn't moving can make all the difference (just one of the reasons I don't camp) or maybe an evening in the pub listening to the conversation of the fishermen who take even the wildest weather in their stride but who will never take unnecessary risks.

Sometimes I think we try to domesticate our world, to make it more predictable, to exercise control over our environment and, whilst that has many benefits for humanity, it comes at a great cost to the future of the planet.

This week's gospel reading is longer than the small section which I have chosen. It begins with Jesus preparing his disciples for the journey which lies ahead of him, of all of them: of the wildness of his suffering and death but also of his homecoming, his constant presence with them, with us.

Peter, the fisherman, can't make sense of what Jesus is saying and tries to change the story to make it more palatable and Jesus gets angry with him:

*"you are setting your mind not on divine things  
but on human things"*

Perhaps this is why the Isles of Scilly have helped me on my journey of faith. They remind me that following Jesus means a different kind of security – not relying on the predictability of the world (which has a way of letting us down) but on the guidance of the Spirit of God which may lead us into wild places, but which will never abandon us.