

## My Emmaus Journey

*We are the people of God on pilgrimage; each of us is on a journey toward the heavenly Jerusalem. It is a journey that calls for heroism. God offers his son as the way and his spirit as the source of strength and love on the journey<sup>1</sup>*

Our Emmaus journey on West Cork's Wild Atlantic way started with great excitement and expectation. The journey made me to think and pray for the people who hunger for food and who hunger for life, as I experienced the Exhibition on the Great Famine in Skibbereen heritage centre. It had an enormous impact on my spiritual journey as I could turn back and see the ways and means I came across, the struggle I went through especially the experience my people have gone through in Sri Lanka, losing thousands and thousands of lives. It was a great opportunity for me to understand that the spiritual journey is not 'a bed of roses,' where you experience pleasure and happiness all the times, but that there are many ups and downs. "*Two roads diverged in a wood, - I took the one less traveled by, and that made all the difference*" – Robert Frost – "The road not taken".

The other part of my Emmaus journey was to Lough Hyne where I enjoyed Europe's first marine nature reserve, by which I was really filled with awe. It is a place of stunning natural beauty. This was followed by climbing the Knockomagh hill, which gave me the courage and strength to face the challenges in my spiritual life. "Who can climb the mountain of the Lord" – this is the prayer I prayed throughout the climb. "I could climb the mountain of the Lord and experience his love and mercy" was my mantra prayer as I descended from the mountain and went to swim in the cold and chilling waters of Lough Hyne.

*"Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity"* (Laudato Si).

The third day was another fabulous day, gifted by God to us to experience what Jesus went through with his apostles during his public ministry in the Sea of Galilee. The roaring water bay, the mountains, the beautiful birds which were flying over the water looking for their prey, and the diving and playful dolphins reminded me of the beautiful creatures of the almighty God.

*Earth's crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God, but only he who sees, takes off his shoes. The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.*  
"Aurora Leigh" by Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

It was even more interesting to go for a three-hour walk, which gave me a great opportunity to experience the marvelous nature created by God. Namely, mature wood, amazing biodiversity, Kilkeran Lake and shore, sand dunes and a mile-long stone beach. I could remember the psalmist saying, "Let the sea thunder and all that it holds, and the world, with all who live in it; let all the rivers clap their hands and the mountains shout for joy" (Psalm 98:7-8)

---

<sup>1</sup> Praying with Scripture, "Maureen Gallagher. Clare Wagner, O.P" pg 75.

The most significant experience for me, was the morning meditation on the sea shore with the Laudato Si - as Jesus did during his public ministry, “in the morning, long before dawn, he got up and left the house, and went off to a lonely place and prayed there” (MK:1:35.)

*“I stand on the shores of the deep.  
I play at the ocean’s edge.  
The waters splash upon the shore;  
Animals and children celebrate the sound,  
The coolness of water,  
Of water’s dance upon the shore” (Anonymous)*