

Acts of the Apostles 2. 14a, 22-32

1 Peter 1. 3-9

John 20. 17-31

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Our gospel reading today from John is the conclusion of the gospel: *these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.* Over the course of the last century there has been a line drawn between faith and science with a view that the two are somehow mutually exclusive. You either embrace faith; or you embrace science. But you can't embrace both, is what we have been raised on. You can't believe in both goes the line.

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At the same time as all this, I came to pondering this divide between faith and science which we have been led to believe exists. Wondering about the nature of faith and the nature of science, I came to recognise that they are actually very similar in their approach. Both of them in many ways call for wonder, call for openness, and a willingness to watch and to not come hard and fast conclusions too quickly. The scientific mind is a curious mind because it invites us to observe what is around us, observe what is taking place and to ask, as Professor Julius Sumner-Miller used to ask: why is it so? We used to joke about him and his irrepressible passion for science and his shrill American accent, but his was an fervent attempt to educate young Australians to be curious about the world. As Dr Karl – of the loud shirts - does in our own time. The true scientific mind is open and curious and disciplined in the way it pursues lines of enquiry.

And the mind we bring to faith is also curious where we are invited to wonder about God and the nature of being and the world as the site of God's creative expression. Faith also invites us to

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I was interested in this misunderstanding of science because of the way in which so many seem to also misunderstand the nature of faith; the matter of religious belief. When people say: I don't believe, I wonder what are they actually saying? What is that they don't believe? I find that with a bit of probing that the statement reflects an approach to religious life which in many ways is about believing things. Like people seeing science as a body of knowledge, too often Christian faith is seen as believing a range of things about God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, scripture and the church. The way that we read the Creeds doesn't help us in this regard – particularly in this post-scientific age we live in. To believe things, in what we might call a blind faith kind of way, is called fideism. It's an ism like communism, liberalism, capitalism. Fideism is in a similar way actually an ideology or a body of thought.

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