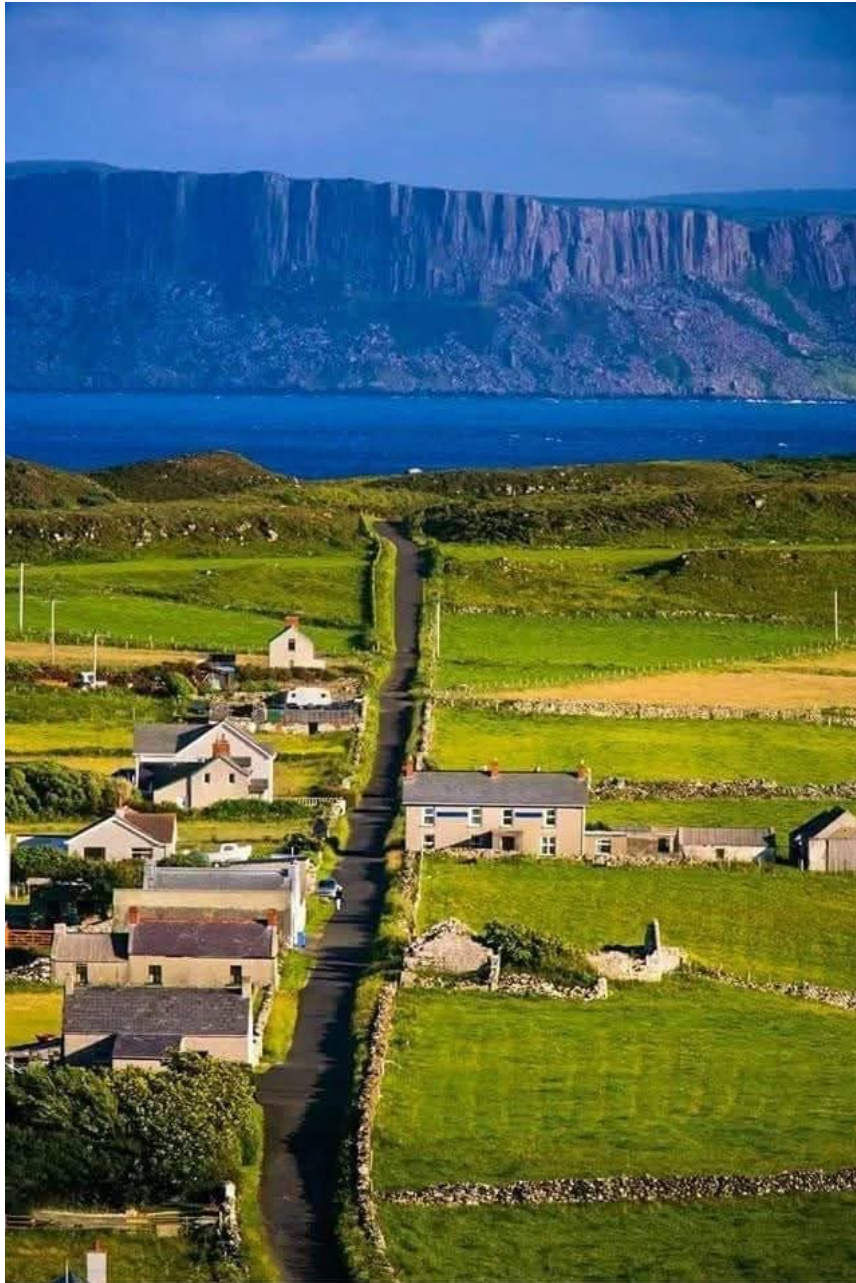


Speaking to the soul



Cynical

Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, “We have found the very person Moses and the prophets

wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth.” “Nazareth!” exclaimed Nathanael. “Can anything good come from Nazareth?John 1:45-46

Wherever you live, there is probably a town not far away with a dodgy reputation. For whatever reason, the place is held in suspicion, and you can't imagine that anything good would ever come out of it! Nathanael came from Cana, which is not far away from Nazareth, and it appears that a typical town rivalry made Nathanael respond in that way.

Philip wasn't put off by Nathanael's dismissive response to Jesus. He invited Nathanael to see Jesus for himself. That changed everything. Jesus saw Nathanael and made the amazing statement: “Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity” (John 1:47). Within moments, Nathanael had declared that Jesus was the Son of God, the King of Israel. None of that would have happened unless Philip had persisted. He could easily have felt a bit hurt by Nathanael's cynical response and decided not to push it, but he didn't. He gave Nathanael the opportunity to meet Jesus for himself.

When we speak about Jesus, we will often face a dismissive response. I have found that many people dismiss Christianity because of what they've seen of the Church. They will be quick to point out any whiff of hypocrisy that they have picked up, or to tell the story of a rude church minister. We should always listen to those accusations with grace and patience. Their stories may be entirely correct. We Christians are not perfect and are capable of hypocrisy, rudeness and much else besides. Our role is never to point

to Christians or the Church, but to encourage them to meet Jesus, knowing that he alone can give them life.

QUESTION

How do you respond when people are cynical about Christianity?

PRAYER

Loving Father, thank you that we can always point people to Jesus with confidence, knowing that he will never let them down. Amen

*Photograph - Road on Rathlin Island with a backdrop
Fairhead on the mainland*

