

SUNDAY PLUS

Be willing to share



Reflect God's generosity

by Paul Higginson

According to Oxfam half the world lives on less than £4 a day. The globe's richest one percent own half of the world's

wealth — and this figure is rising, not falling. At the other end of the spectrum, seventy percent of the world's population account for just three percent of global wealth. If you live in a developed country it is likely that you are amongst the wealthiest

people who have ever lived.


Generosity is an essential part of the Christian message. In today's Gospel Jesus praises the widow who contributes "all she had to live on" to the treasury, when the rich gave only what "money they had over". Mother Teresa put it this way: "If you give what you do not need, it isn't giving". St Paul urges the early Christians to "give cheerfully", and there is a strong tradition in Christianity of giving a tithe, a percentage of one's

income, to charity.

The Gospel instruction to be generous does not just refer to charitable giving. Giving to others through our acts of kindness and love, or through the generous sharing of our time, will be reflected back to us. In other passages in the Gospel, Jesus refers to reaping what we sow. We are urged to be people who give, people who share, for it is in giving that we receive.

Our generosity should reflect God's generosity to us. It is simply giving back to him what he has first given to us.

Following many years working in the classroom and as a catechist, Paul Higginson is discovering that retirement gives him even more opportunities to support his parish.

Dearest Jesus, teach me to be generous and to give without counting the cost to my personal comfort. Help me to spread your love in everything that I say, think and do.  Amen.

Yours

by St Teresa of Avila

"Christ has no body now, but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth, but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which
Christ looks compassion into the world.
Yours are the feet
with which Christ walks to do good.
Yours are the hands
with which Christ blesses the world."

Feast of the week

Thursday 11 November

St Martin of Tours

(316 or 336 - 397)

Martin was only ten when he secretly started attending Christian gatherings. The son of a senior cavalry officer in the Roman army, Martin was obliged, at the age of fifteen, to follow in his father's footsteps.

Martin was possibly only eighteen years old when, in the bitter cold of winter, he rode towards Amiens in modern-day

France. Just outside the city gates, he took pity on a thinly-dressed beggar, pulled off his thick cloak and, with his sword, cut it in half, giving half to the shivering man.

That night tradition says Martin dreamed of the man – except that it was Jesus wearing the half-cloak – who told a group of angels, "Martin, who is still but a catechumen, clothed me with this robe."

Shortly after his vision, Martin was baptised. He left the army two years later, eventually becoming a hermit and, later, the Bishop of Tours. London's church of St Martin-in-the-Fields is named after him.

"Let us all remember this: one cannot proclaim the Gospel of Jesus without the tangible witness of one's life."

Pope Francis

Today:
1 Kings 17:10-16
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

Monday:
Wisdom 1:1-7
Luke 17:1-6
(W): All Saints of Wales (Feast)

Tuesday:
Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12
1 Corinthians 3:9-11, 16-17
John 2:13-22

Wednesday:
Wisdom 6:1-11
Luke 17:11-19

Thursday:
Wisdom 7:22 – 8:1
Luke 17:20-25

Friday:
Wisdom 13:1-9
Luke 17:26-37

Saturday:
Wisdom 18:14-16;
19:6-9
Luke 18:1-8

Next Sunday:
Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32

SUNDAY PLUS



Be willing to share

Attending to the present

by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel the evangelist Mark shares Jesus' vision of the future. After the cosmic fireworks in Jesus' prophecy, Jesus imagines a peace beyond suffering. This vision of peace is important for Mark's persecuted community: they need more than a firework display to see them through their own historical time of turbulence. If their hope is not to be exhausted by the pain of the present, they need help to

imagine life beyond their current suffering and loss. Mark gives their hope help in sharing Jesus' vision. For that is the purpose of all apocalyptic writing: to fund the hope of those who suffer in the present.

In the meantime, we must depend on the promise of Jesus: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." No one, not even the Son, knows when all this will take place. The only sure thing we can hold to is the word of Jesus.

We live in an age of uncertainty: the future never looks wholly

secure. But Jesus holds out a vision that takes us beyond our worst imaginings. There is a place beyond the heat of battle and the conflict of war. And today we hold holy all those who fought for an end to conflict and war. We honour their sacrifice, particularly those who

laid down their lives so that others might live in freedom. We pray this day that the hopes of the fallen will not perish and that their sacrifice will not be in vain.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

They shall grow not old

by Robert Laurence Binyon

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them...

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

Lord of peace, in the horrors of battlefield trenches, many combatants turned items of war into things of beauty. May we hear their message to look beyond conflict and to find and create loveliness even in the most difficult of circumstances. 🕊 Amen.

Feast of the week

Wednesday 17 November

St Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231)

Born in the days of commonplace royal child marriages and short life-expectancy, St Elizabeth of Hungary was married at fourteen and widowed at twenty, already the mother of three children to a husband, Louis IV, Landgrave of Thuringia, whom she came to dearly love.

In 1223, at the age of sixteen, Elizabeth met Franciscan friars and, with her husband's approval, joined the lay branch of

the Franciscan Order. She made strenuous efforts to care for the poor people of the kingdom, building a hospital and even giving away royal treasures in order to provide for anybody in need.

Tongues wagged. People complained to Elizabeth's husband that she was stealing castle treasures. One day, when she was taking bread to some poor people nearby and to quieten the gossips, Louis asked her what was hidden in her cloak. Elizabeth opened it and everyone saw not bread but red and white roses – which explains why Elizabeth is always portrayed as carrying roses.



"I see the Church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars. You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else."

Pope Francis

Today:

Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32

Monday:

1 Maccabees 1:10-15.
41-43, 54-57, 62-64
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday:

2 Maccabees
6:18-31
Luke 19:1-10

(S): St Margaret (Feast):

Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20.
30-31 or 1 Corinthians
12:31 – 13:13
Matthew 25:31-46

Wednesday:

2 Maccabees 7:1, 20-31
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday:

1 Maccabees
2:15-29
Luke 19:41-44

Friday:

1 Maccabees
4:36-37, 52-59
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday:

1 Maccabees
6:1-13
Luke 20:27-40

Next Sunday:

Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37



SUNDAY PLUS

King and centre of hearts



His love changes everything

by Sr Janet Fearnis
FMDM

Who loved him and whom did he love – really love? What did he think as he travelled from country to country, longing for former friends to offer a compassionate refuge instead of rejecting a powerless ex-monarch? The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, died in exile in a foreign land on 27

July 1980, aged sixty, apparently with a bag of Iranian soil beneath his bed.

Like us, he had reflected on his successes and failures. He commented, “I calculated the amount of time I spent with my father during my entire life... the total amount of time I had with him, if you add up the hours, was about two months. My father was a busy man... we had very few opportunities to really sit down and talk as father and son.”

The feast of Christ the King reminds us of the crucified Jesus, agonisingly suspended between heaven and earth but dying without

regrets. Jesus and his Father were and are inseparable. He declared, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... I am in the Father and the Father is in me”.

Jesus returned to the Father marked by the wounds of love which Pilate was unwilling to earn. He recognised Jesus’ innocence but wanted earthly power and Caesar’s approval. He asked, “Truth?... What is that?” but

failed to see the answer: unstinting, all-consuming, uncompromising love.

Countless millions of people, past, present and to come, regard Jesus as the king and centre of their hearts. To give and receive his love has been, is and will be their goal. His love changes everything.

Sr Janet Fearnis is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

On children

by Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor carries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer’s hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Feast of the week
Monday 22 November

St Cecilia (200-230)

Christians found life tough during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander. Christians talked about the kingdom of God at a time when the emperor and the State were paramount. Dangerous!

Cecilia? Many of the stories surrounding her life are very unlikely. What seems to be true is that she was a young Christian woman who suffered two botched attempts to execute her. She didn’t drown


and the executioner not only failed to decapitate her with a sword: he also ran away in shame.

Critically injured, Cecilia survived for three days, but used the time before her death to give all she had to the poor. She apparently died singing hymns.

Cecilia was initially buried in Rome’s Catacombs of San Callisto but, in 821, was exhumed and her body moved to the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, built above what is thought to have been the location of her home. She subsequently became the patroness of music and musicians.

“Truth, according to the Christian faith, is God’s love for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, truth is a relationship.”

Pope Francis

Lord God, watch over children and young people. Be with them in their moments of happiness and sadness, enthusiasm and friendships. Let their hopes and dreams inspire and lighten the world in which they live.  Amen.

Today:
Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37

Monday:
Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20
Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday:
Daniel 2:31-45
Luke 21:5-11

Wednesday:
Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28
Luke 21:12-19

Thursday:
Daniel 6:12-28
Luke 21:20-28

Friday:
Daniel 7:2-14
Luke 21:29-33

Saturday:
Daniel 7:15-27
Luke 21:34-36

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36

SUNDAY PLUS

Look up!




By Fr Peter Morris C.Ss.R.

In amateur dramatics, a key thing I learned was how to make an entrance. A trick of the trade is to stride on, stop into a striking pose and look out across the top of the audience. You win the crowd's attention. To excel in theatre, knowing your physicality and appreciating what impact it makes goes a long way.

In the Gospel today, Jesus encourages us to stand up straight and hold our heads high, looking out for his coming. He encourages in his followers a readiness for that meeting when it happens. I find echoes of this teaching in Jesus' dramatic healing of the woman hunched over. Her visual experience once consisted of feet and dirt. Upon his touch, her world was a grander place because she could look up again.

We may have spent a good bit of time, especially in the last year or so, hunched over a computer. Our vision may have been quite limited by our isolation during the pandemic. We are invited to make an entrance into this new liturgical year. We begin by correcting our spiritual posture, broadening our vision, so that we may spot his coming into our lives, however that may be. In addition, we may gain the attention of others in need and embody the coming of Christ for them. This is not just performance or simple posturing. We stop peering at the dirt and look up and out for Our Lord making his own entrance into our lives.

Fr Peter Morris' book, *Christian Playfulness*, is available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Lord God, teach me to seek you, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, or find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you in my desire, Let me desire you in my seeking. Let me find you by loving you, Let me love you when I find you.  Amen.

St Anselm

Preparing for Christmas

Source Unknown

Here are a few suggestions for special gifts:

- a firm handshake to a shaky soul,
- a kind word to a lonely person,
- a warm smile to the disheartened,
- a sincere concern for someone troubled,
- a feeling of compassion for the neglected,
- a comforting thought for the bereaved,
- a respect for the dignity of others,
- a defence of the rights of individuals,
- a word of witness to help a seeking soul,
- a Merry Christmas to all.

Feast of the week Tuesday 30 November

St Andrew

Andrew, "the first to be an Apostle", is traditionally also credited with bringing Christianity to Scotland.

Tradition relates that, in 832, in what is now East Lothian, King Angus of the Picts prepared to fight a large Anglo-Saxon army. The night before the battle, he dreamed that he would see a cross and must fight in its name. When he awoke, in the deep blue early morning sky, Angus saw white clouds in the shape of the Saltire, the diagonal cross on which St Andrew is

said to have died. He ordered his men to carry the emblem into battle – and won. From that moment, Andrew and his Saltire cross became Scotland's national symbols.

As the years passed and especially during national emergencies, the Saltire has represented Andrew's protective concern for Scotland. Such famous historical characters as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce are recorded as depending on the apostle who introduced his brother Peter to Jesus.

St Andrew, watch over, bless and protect the people of Scotland.

"Jesus spoke to [Peter and Andrew] in terms of their own livelihood: 'You are fishermen, and you will become fishers of men'... The Lord does the same with us: he looks for us where we are, he loves us as we are, and he patiently walks by our side."

Pope Francis