

SUNDAY PLUS

See differently



Our mission from God

by Fr Royston Price C.Ss.R.

In the Gospel today, we hear about Jesus restoring hearing and speech to a man. What Christ does physically in the reading he does spiritually to each one of us. This healing is an image of how he acts in our soul. In our encounter with the Lord we're able to

hear the living Word of God, and let it take deep roots in our heart. We can find the inner courage to announce the Good News and the prudence to know how best to go about it. Each of us has some mission from God, some way of making Jesus present and known in our context, even if it is unobtrusively loving and praying for our neighbours, family and friends.

When we live out our Christian life knowing that we have encountered Christ, that he is dwelling and working within us, then we can achieve a sense of tranquil confidence. We may not have grand eloquence or rhetorical flair, but in living out our

faith day-to-day we are preaching a far more powerful sermon, one that others certainly notice.

Only in heaven will we find out exactly how our prayers, life and actions have influenced those around you and made the love of God present. United to Christ, he is with us in our home, at work and at leisure, and we are bringing him to everyone we meet. When that's the case, then just like in the Gospel, the Kingdom of God spreads far and wide, even without our conscious effort.

Fr Royston Price, a recently ordained priest, is the Vocations Director for the Redemptorist London Province.

Loving Lord, help me to see my life through your eyes and to accept the mission you have given me, to tell everyone just how much you love us. Help me to listen with your ears, to the unspoken words which might allow me to support the people around me. 🙏 Amen.

Suffering in silence

By Katie Knight

At the scene of an accident, those casualties who are the most in need of urgent care and attention are those who are still and silent. If someone is making a great deal of noise, then they can safely be left for a while until after the neediest have received the appropriate attention.

A young lad in his late teens recently tripped over a tree root and fell to the ground, where he made a great show of his trauma. Within seconds five girls of about his own age surrounded him, all offering copious advice and moral support. The only injury had been to his vanity – a hurt which the girls quickly soothed – and he soon continued jauntily on his way.

What about those people who suffer in silence, perhaps afraid to ask for help, perhaps reluctant to “make a fuss”? Do we notice them? Do we look more deeply, see things differently? What would Jesus have done?

Katie Knight is a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Feast of the week
Wednesday 8 September

Our Lady's birthday

We all like birthdays. They are an occasion for families and friends to tell us, “I'm glad that you were born!” Birthdays help us to feel special and loved.

Of course we don't know the actual date of Our Lady's birthday. Even the names of her parents, Joachim and Ann, have come down to us via a longstanding tradition which might or might not be accurate.

Family birthdays are particularly important. Just as our parents wanted

to make our own birthday happy, special and memorable, so did we, even as small children, go out of our way to do something extraordinary for them. Don't we all remember the laughter and secrecy as we wrote a card and wrapped a present?

So why do we celebrate Our Lady's birthday?

Might there be something deep within our hearts which says to her, “I'm glad that you were born!”

To celebrate Our Lady's birthday is a simple way of saying “Thank you” and “I love you”.

“People are looking for someone to listen to them. Someone willing to grant them time, to listen to their dramas and difficulties. This is what I call the ‘apostolate of the ear’ and it is important. Very important. I feel compelled to say to confessors: talk, listen with patience, and above all tell people that God loves them.”

Pope Francis

Today: Isaiah 35:4-7 James 2:1-5 Mark 7:31-37
Monday: Colossians 1:24 – 2:3 Luke 6:6-11
Tuesday: Colossians 2:6-15 Luke 6:12-19
Wednesday: Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30 Matthew 1:1-16. 18-23
Thursday: Colossians 3:12-17 Luke 6:27-38
Friday: 1 Timothy 1:1-2. 12-14 Luke 6:39-42
Saturday: 1 Timothy 1:15-17 Luke 6:43-49
Next Sunday: Isaiah 50:5-9 James 2:14-18 Mark 8:27-35

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Who am I?

In season and out of season



by Fr Maurice O'Mahony C.Ss.R.

St Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, writes: "Preach the Gospel in season or not, welcome or unwelcome". It seems there is no optimum time to proclaim Jesus and the Gospel. Yes, for many people in every generation the proclamation of God's love and the promise of salvation is "Good News". Equally, there is often opposition.

Jesus experienced similar responses during his public ministry. His time was dominated by two powerful groups: the Romans who ruthlessly occupied the land, and the religious leaders who exercised great power over the people. Yet, Jesus was not discouraged; he proclaimed the coming reign of God with a clear, challenging message: repent and change your lives!

Jesus maintained a low profile during those early days, protecting the message and giving it time to root in his first followers. However,

everything about him led many to believe he might be the Messiah. That is why he asked his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" and followed it with a personal challenge, "But you... who do you say I am?" Then and now, that answer made the difference.

The people among whom he ministered made the link between Jesus and the prophecy of Isaiah. The religious authorities also heard about him, his activities and, alarmingly, what the people were saying. Jesus knew these two worlds would eventually collide

and he told his disciples that he would be handed over, suffer and be put to death.

We are Jesus' disciples in 2021. Many are indifferent, even hostile, to faith. Yet, Jesus calls us to share the message. It is our privilege to act in his name, in season or not, welcome or unwelcome. So, be courageous!

Fr Maurice P. O'Mahony is a Redemptorist priest of the London Province. Over forty years of priesthood he has worked in a variety of apostolates and is currently developing Redemptorist Lay Ministry.

"The love of God is not something vague or generic; the love of God has a name and a face: Jesus Christ."

Pope Francis

Calvary is a beginning

by Phil Ferguson

Wildfires raged throughout many tree-covered areas of the world during the hot summer months and severe drought of 2020. Hosepipe bans and standpipes became a daily event for thousands of householders as fire brigades heroically tried to extinguish flames and, paradoxically, to keep their use of water to a minimum. Farmers watched helplessly as huge cracks appeared in their dry fields and thirsty crops withered and died.

Many television documentaries covered not only the drought and wildfire experiences but also flooding, hurricanes and earthquakes, all possibly effects of climate change.

Time and again, seemingly "ordinary" people showed themselves capable of extraordinary courage, generosity and self-sacrifice. Their Calvary was a beginning, not an end.

Feast of the week
Tuesday 14 September

Triumph of the cross

The young Emperor Constantine was heading out to fight the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (AD 312) when he looked up towards the sun and saw a cross of light above it and the words, "In this sign, you will conquer." That night, according to tradition, he had a vision in which Jesus explained the meaning of the sign, which Constantine ordered his army to make its military standard. He subsequently always claimed that his victory in battle the following day

was the result of his vision of the cross.

Soon afterwards, Constantine became the first Christian Roman Emperor. In 313, he issued the Edict of Milan which allowed Christianity to be freely practised.

With the conversion of her son, Constantine's mother, Helena, soon also became a Christian. On his instructions – and with his money – she travelled to the Holy Land in search of Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre and the remains of "the True Cross". She believed she found all three, but Helena's enormous contribution to early Christianity is another story...

All was not lost. Within days of the first rainfall following devastating wildfires, blackened woodland started to turn green. Tiny blades of grass emerged through the parched soil. Bit by bit, the world started to change. In seeing endings, we discovered new life.

Phil Ferguson is a former teacher.

Lord, when times are hard, it can be difficult to see that you offer a choice. If I can see who you really are and follow you in everything that I say, think and do, even my Calvary can be a new beginning and the start of a journey of discovery.  Amen.

Today:
Isaiah 50:5-9
James 2:14-18
Mark 8:27-35

Monday:
1 Timothy 2:1-8
Luke 7:1-10

Tuesday:
Numbers 21:4-9
Philippians 2:6-11
John 3:13-17

Wednesday:
Hebrews 5:7-9
John 19:25-27
or Luke 2:33-35

Thursday:
1 Timothy 4:12-16
Luke 7:36-50

Friday:
1 Timothy 6:2-12
Luke 8:1-3

Saturday:
1 Timothy 6:13-16
Luke 8:4-15

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 2:12, 17-20
James 3:16 – 4:3
Mark 9:30-37

SUNDAY PLUS

Look around you

The child as our teacher

by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel Jesus takes a little child, sets him in front of his disciples and challenges his disciples to accept the little one. When they can welcome that little child, they can welcome the real Jesus. Jesus compares himself to the little child, the one who cannot resort to power tactics when threatened or maltreated. Jesus' protection is his Father; his trust is placed in the God who will ensure

his protection. When suffering comes, Jesus refuses to abandon trust in the Father. That trust makes him vulnerable, like a little child, but unless the disciples can come to welcome that vulnerability, they will never understand the way of Jesus.

Jesus offers a permanent challenge to his followers to welcome the powerless, to take to heart the weakest members of the community. He places himself in their company. Special hospitality should be offered to those from whom we can benefit the least. Their vulnerability is something that Jesus not only shares but values.



As he takes the road to Jerusalem, his own vulnerability will expose him to those who lie in wait. There will be people keen to explore his gentleness and put his endurance to the test. In drawing his own followers away from looking to power and prestige for models of discipleship, Jesus invites them to a new openness to the Father. No

earthly power will save Jesus from death in Jerusalem; only his Father can save him from being left for dead. That is what the Father does. That is how the Father welcomes the trust of the little one.

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

Lord, watch over, protect and bless my family in good times and in bad, in their joys and sorrows, ups and downs, successes and failures, laughter and tears. Let us love each other more with every second that passes.  Amen.

Mission in the home

by Lucy Russell

"Get off me!" James (14) and Edgar (12) have never come to blows, but it was getting close. "What are you arguing about? Go!" I shouted at one, "and sit in the kitchen. And you, go and sit in the front room. Now!" They did. And sobbed. I stood in the hallway and took a deep breath. "What is this about?" I asked. "I haven't got any socks, he's taken all of them, he always takes my socks, and don't tell me off for hurting him, I didn't hurt him. Why would I hurt him? I love him!"

There can be arguments and rivalries about the smallest of things, although often it is the smallest things

Feast of the week Thursday 23 September St Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968)

"I consider what writers say about the kingfishers, little birds who build their nests on the beach near the sea. They build it in a circular form and so tightly compressed that the sea water cannot penetrate it . . . Here these graceful little birds place their young ones, so that when

the sea comes upon them by surprise, they can swim with confidence and float on the waves . . . I want your heart to be like this – well-compact and closed on all sides, so that if the worries and storms of the world, the evil spirit and the flesh come upon it, it will not be penetrated. Leave but one opening to your heart that is toward heaven . . . How I love and am enraptured by those little birds!"

From the writings of St Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

that mean the most. But in the end there is love. And that is what truly matters. Once all was calm, I went to the shops and bought ten pairs of black socks.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of *Who Do You Say You Are?*, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

"May we always care for our children, not counting the cost, so that they may never believe themselves to be mistakes, but always know their infinite worth. Let us ask the Lord for this grace: that our hearts become free and filled with light, so that we can rejoice as children of God."

Pope Francis

Today:
Wisdom 2:12. 17-20
James 3:16 – 4:3
Mark 9:30-37

Monday:
Ezra 1:1-6
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday:
Ephesians 4:1-7. 11-13
Matthew 9:9-13

Wednesday:
Ezra 9:5-9
Luke 9:1-6

Thursday:
Haggai 1:1-8
Luke 9:7-9

Friday:
Haggai 1:15 – 2:9
Luke 9:18-22

Saturday:
Zechariah 2:5-9. 14-15
Luke 9:43-45

Next Sunday:
Numbers 11:25-29
James 5:1-6
Mark 9:38-43. 45. 47-48

SUNDAY PLUS

Be generous

A heart full of love

by Fr Royston Price C.Ss.R.

The Gospel today is quite forceful in reminding us of a pitfall to be avoided in our Christian life, as well as the corrective for it. John reports an instance of someone doing the Lord's work, but who isn't part of their group: surely they should be stopped? Jesus tells us that there can be no room for factionalism or cliques within the Church. We might belong to some group or movement, but we should be very careful about our attitude to the apostolic work of others. The Church isn't a "one-party state" and there is plenty of room for legitimate variation in spirituality, culture and emphasis. What does matter is being grounded in Jesus Christ: Love made flesh.

The centrality of love is Our Lord's answer to the problem of factions and

divisions. Our actions, thoughts and entire life should be infused with divine love. When we are acting in love, then whatever we do can be a way of spreading the Kingdom of God. Even something objectively tiny like offering someone a glass of water, when done out of love acquires a tremendous and eternal dignity.

When our heart is full of divine love, then we can appreciate the unity and diversity of the Church. The body of Christ is made up of many members and each of us is called to a unique mission and ministry; as long as we are deeply rooted in Christ, then we can see the work of others not as a threat to our own cherished projects, but as another part of the wonderful work of God in the world.

Fr Royston Price, a recently ordained priest, is the Vocations Director for the Redemptorist London Province.



Lord of love, you invite us to give "not less than everything" when we follow you. Teach us to give mercy, compassion, companionship and love to the people we meet on our journey towards you.  Amen.

Be merciful

by Katie Knight

Her visit to A&E with a feigned illness gave the young woman the excuse to search for safety and distance from an abusive husband. Once there, she shuddered, went down on her knees and, convulsed with sobs, begged to be admitted, even if only overnight. "My husband will beat me again if I go home. I cannot go home. Please let me stay in the hospital."

Police and social workers can be afraid of "interfering" in cases of domestic violence lest they accidentally make a bad situation worse. Frequently the Church is a refuge, offering support in ways beyond the capabilities of statutory bodies. A listening ear, an open heart, an encouraging smile might be all

Feast of the week
Monday 27 September

St Vincent de Paul
(1581-1660)

"If you consider the poor in the light of faith, then you will observe that they are taking the place of the Son of God who chose to be poor.

Since Christ willed to be born poor, he chose for himself disciples who were poor. He made himself the servant of the poor and shared their poverty. He went so far as to say that he would consider every deed

which either helps or harms the poor as done for or against himself. Since God surely loves the poor, he also loves those who love the poor. For when one person holds another dear, he also includes in his affection anyone who loves or serves the one he loves. That is why we hope that God will love us for the sake of the poor. So when we visit the poor and needy, we try to understand the poor and weak. We sympathize with them so fully that we can echo Paul's words: I have become all things to all people."

From the writings of St Vincent de Paul

that is needed for someone to take the first step towards safety. A smile might make the difference between fear and courage, between abuse and freedom.

A parish filled with smiling and compassionate faces can offer help and hope. A smile can make the difference.

Katie Knight is a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

"What a beautiful truth of faith this is for our lives: the mercy of God! God's love for us is so great, so deep; it is an unending love, one which always takes us by the hand and supports us, lifts us up and leads us on."

Pope Francis

Today:
Numbers 11:25-29
James 5:1-6
Mark 9:38-43, 45, 47-48

Monday:
Zechariah 8:1-8
Luke 9:46-50

Tuesday:
Zechariah 8:20-23
Luke 9:51-56

Wednesday:
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14 or
Apocalypse 12:7-12
John 1:47-51

Thursday:
Nehemiah 8:1-12
Luke 10:1-12

Friday:
Baruch 1:15-22
Luke 10:13-16

Saturday:
Exodus 23:20-23
Matthew 18:1-5, 10

Next Sunday:
Genesis 2:18-24
Hebrews 2:9-11
Mark 10:2-16