

SUNDAY PLUS

Celebrate littleness

The game of Snakes and Ladders and Ladders

By James Gallogly

Wisdom is a vital component of any life plan. However, planning your future in the Criminal Justice system is akin to playing the game of Snakes and Ladders.

A range of ladders exists. These include education courses, even the opportunity to access the Open University. There is a range of work to do to keep the prison running: cleaning, painting, kitchen, bakery, waste management, to name but a

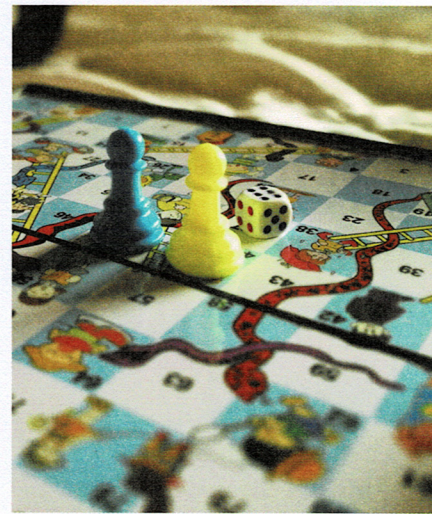
few tasks. There are specific work preparation courses among which Timpson's make commendable efforts. There are programmes to address offending behaviour and learn new skills... all are tremendously valuable ways to improve for the future.

The snakes, though, are everywhere! There's the poorly planned unexpected move to a prison not offering the course you need, the long wait to reach a prison that does, the lockdowns that deny access to learning or training,

the attack that you didn't see coming and was meant for someone else anyway!

The man in the Gospel is trying his best but meets another hurdle. He goes away sad, but it doesn't mean he won't accept the challenge.

When we pray for men and women in our prisons, please make their opportunity to choose a wise path a real intention. Too often the pathway is so heavily strewn



with dangers that it appears wiser not to set out. God wants us all to embark on the path to follow him with confidence and trust. Let us pray that the hearts of those "inside" can fully trust in the Lord.

"For men it is impossible, but not for God."

James Gallogly is a Catholic lay chaplain in a UK prison.

Today let us ask the Virgin Mary for a huge grace, that of littleness: to be children who trust the Father, certain that he will not fail to take care of us.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Sunday 13 October

St Edward the Confessor
(1003-1066)

Westminster Abbey is the huge church which the Anglo-Saxon King of England, Edward the Confessor, caused to be built on the ancient site of St Peter's abbey. It's also where he was buried. Intensely prayerful, gentle and loyal, Edward had a great devotion to St Peter and wanted to be buried in a church dedicated to the apostle who so often

"muddled along" but whose eventual fidelity made him an iconic leader of the Church throughout its two-thousand-year history.

Edward the Confessor wasn't the perfect king, but he tried to be and that's what matters. He lived in turbulent, warlike times. Did he foresee that the confusion about his successor would lead to the Battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest of England? Probably not. Did he expect to become the patron saint of couples with difficult marriages and of separated spouses? Definitely not!

Today we pray for all those who are experiencing problems in their marriages.

Planning priorities

By Krista Nelson

I love getting a new planner for the upcoming year. My planners usually have space to put all my priorities for the week and year. But can we have "priorities"? In a reflection by Catholic speaker Jeff

Cavins, he suggested we can really only have one priority. (I think you can guess what that is.) Boy, did that hit home! Everything else is just a to-do list. If we get that one priority right – loving God and following his commandments – everything else falls into place. But when we don't get that right, the balance slips – we focus too much on all our

other "priorities" and inflate their importance. Soon we are stressing about the email that didn't get sent and snapping at spouses because the dishwasher wasn't emptied. But would we act differently if that number one position on our list of jobs was simply "Do the Lord's will"?

Krista Nelson is a mum of four, catechist and editor.

Lord of life and love, guide all those who are in prison and support their families, carers and victims.
+ Amen.

Today:
Wisdom 7:7-11
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mark 10:17-30

Monday:
Galatians 4:22-24, 26-27, 31 – 5:1
Luke 11:29-32

Tuesday:
Galatians 5:1-6
Luke 11:37-41

Wednesday:
Galatians 5:18-25
Luke 11:42-46

Thursday:
Ephesians 1:1-10
Luke 11:47-54

Friday:
2 Timothy 4:10-17
Luke 10:1-9

Saturday:
Ephesians 1:15-23
Luke 12:8-12

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 53:10-11
Hebrews 4:14-16
Mark 10:35-45