

SUNDAY PLUS

Give hope

Creating worth in people

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

In listening today to Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, Jesus does not ask his disciples to fall in love with their enemies – that would be wholly unrealistic. The followers of Jesus are challenged to be determined about their enemy's welfare, to be stubbornly gracious and to refuse to pay back violence with violence. Hatred can be defeated only by love; injury can be healed only by forgiveness; evil can be controlled only by goodness. That may not reflect conventional wisdom, but it is Jesus'

wisdom in action. It was also David's response to King Saul's aggression.

In his own life Jesus had to work hard at honouring his own ethic. That process was not a painless or bloodless affair: it cost Jesus everything. He offered love first, even though he knew that the return would never measure up to what was offered; he never bargained love for love; he never became involved in stocktaking returns. Above all, he made a habit of confusing his enemies with love.

Jesus expects us, his followers, to share the gifts we have received. Love is offered because someone somewhere is shuffling through a loveless life. Mercy is given because someone somewhere is cloistered in his or her wrongdoing. These are gifts which create worth in another person; they build temples in wasteland; they introduce people to the forgotten geography of paradise; they stop the contagion of meanness.

Love creates its own reality, its own force for goodness. It enables us, time after time, to refuse, like King David, to put a spear through the heart of our enemies.

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



You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. That's how prayer works.

Pope Francis

Mercy that gives hope

By James Gallogly

Like David, it is very easy to be blind to the plight of others, to judge and lack mercy. We do not see the baggage they carry. We take for granted that others have had a stable family background, a satisfactory education and experience good health. However, the lived experience of our neighbours can be eye-opening and heart-breaking. Mercy is the very least thing they deserve, yet this is often far from the case.

Our prisons are full of people who are easily dismissed and for whom there has been no mercy. No account has been given to their acute childhood experiences. Thankfully there are several enlightened companies who are merciful employers. They take the concept of rehabilitation seriously and "do to others as they would have them do to you."

This mercy is life-changing, providing purpose, valuable employment and personal fulfilment where once they did not exist.

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

Jubilee 2025

Jubilee of Deacons

To be ready to serve, we need a healthy heart: a heart healed by God, one which knows forgiveness and is neither closed nor hardened. We would do well each day to pray trustingly for this, asking to be healed by Jesus, to grow more like him who "no longer calls us servants but friends". Dear deacons, this is a grace you can implore daily in prayer. You can offer the Lord your work, your little inconveniences, your weariness and your hopes in an authentic prayer that brings your life to the Lord and the Lord to your life. When you serve at the table of the Eucharist, there you will find the presence of Jesus, who gives himself to you so that you can give yourselves to others.

In this way, available in life, meek of heart and in constant dialogue with Jesus, you will not be afraid to be servants of Christ, and to encounter and caress the flesh of the Lord in the poor of our time.

Pope Francis, Jubilee of Deacons, 2016



Dearest Jesus, teach me to be generous. Teach me to be merciful and compassionate like you. ✚ Amen.

Today: 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23
1 Corinthians 15:45-49
Luke 6:27-38

Monday: Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10
Mark 9:14-29

Tuesday: Ecclesiasticus 2:1-13
Mark 9:30-37

Wednesday: Ecclesiasticus 4:12-22
Mark 9:38-40

Thursday: Ecclesiasticus 5:1-8
Mark 9:41-50

Friday: Ecclesiasticus 6:5-17
Mark 10:1-12

Saturday: Philippians 3:8-14
Matthew 5:13-16

Next Sunday: Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7
1 Corinthians 15:54-58
Luke 6:39-45