

SUNDAY PLUS

Welcome the little ones



by Fr Denis
McBride C.Ss.R.

Keeping trust

The group of Jesus' disciples has been walking along the road, arguing which of them is the greatest. When the group arrives at their destination, Jesus asks them what they have been arguing about. To Jesus' question, the disciples respond with the silence of shame. It is in that silence that Jesus takes a little child, puts his arms around the child, 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 mistreated. 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 Jesus takes the road to Jerusalem, there will be people keen to explore his gentleness and put his endurance to the test. Jesus draws his disciples away from arguing about greatness and invites them to a new openness to the Father. In all that lies ahead, Jesus will stubbornly keep faith with his Father.

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

Lord of life, let me put my hand in yours and walk with you wherever you lead me. Let me trust you completely because you will never lead me in the wrong direction. Amen.

Not lost –
found

by Dr Barbara
Spender

Kevin sells *The Big Issue*. The magazine is a route out of homelessness and unemployment – so I guess he's known the hardest of times. If we had seen him then we might perhaps have dismissed him as one of the hopeless and helpless, not really part of our world.

Now he is transformed, a street vendor par excellence,

with endless repartee, a quip for every passer-by. It's impossible to eavesdrop without smiling. In October he shared his pitch with Brian, one of three ravens – "Say Hello to Brian, he's the one on the left." In Advent he sat in state on a red armchair, dressed as a Christmas tree.

Kevin brings life, humour and warmth to a quiet provincial street. He has made the transition from down-and-out to local character. In one of England's wealthiest cities he is better loved than the Mayor or even the Bishop.

Barbara Spender is a freelance editor and also a local magistrate.

Disaster turns
to laughter

By Giselle Beaumont

One Sunday we were lucky enough to have three generations at my parents' for lunch. All suitably full of Yorkshire puddings and gravy we heard a strange rumbling coming from the downstairs bathroom. My dad went to investigate and we quickly heard, in his Wakefield accent, "Burst pipe! Burst pipe!" As my brother scrambled around for a towel and my dad located the stopcock peace was restored. Then we heard my two-year-old

nephew, Albert, in his altogether higher pitched voice repeat "Burst pipe! Burst pipe!" It is a precious memory for our family that is regularly re-enacted. What could have been a soggy end to an otherwise lovely day has turned into a cherished collective memory. Even now, two years on, we ask Albert "What does grandad say?" and we all know the well repeated refrain "Burst pipe! Burst pipe!" is the wonderful, memory-rich reply we'll get.

Some of the most precious moments in family life are the most unexpected – but aren't they worth treasuring and celebrating?

Giselle Beaumont Editorial Assistant at Redemptorist Publications.

“Children are a gift. They are a gift. Each one is unique and unrepeatable, and at the same time unmistakably linked to his or her roots. Indeed, to be a son or a daughter according to God's plan means carrying in oneself the memory and hope of a love that has become tangible by kindling the life of another human being, original and new.

Pope Francis

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

Monday:
Proverbs 3:27-34
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday:
Proverbs 21:1-6. 10-13
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday:
Proverbs 30:5-9
Luke 9:1-6

Thursday:
Ecclesiastes 1:2-11
Luke 9:7-9

Friday:
Ecclesiastes 3:1-11
Luke 9:18-22

Saturday:
Daniel 7:9-10. 13-14
or Apocalypse 12:7-12
John 1:47-51

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