

SUNDAY PLUS



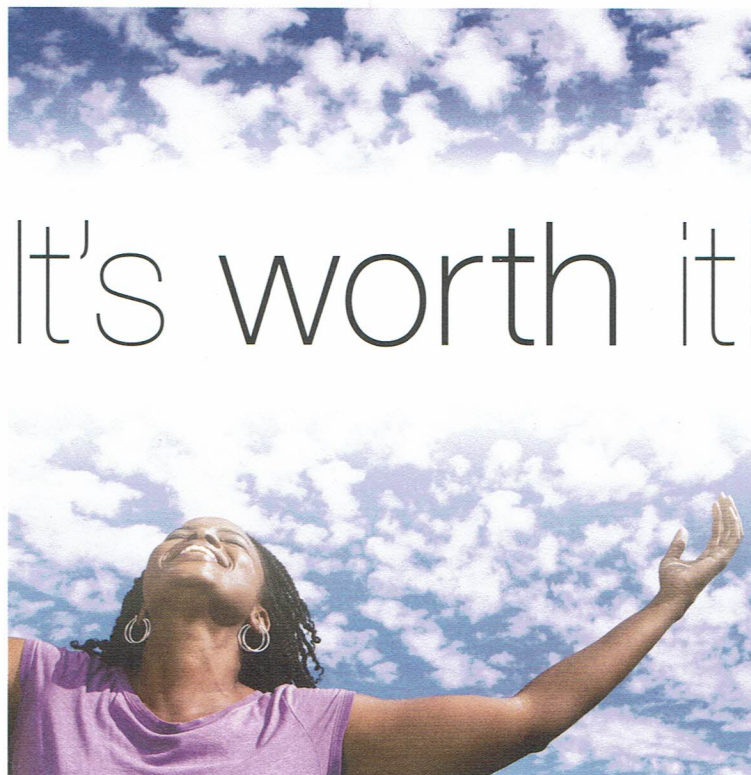
LIVERPOOL 2018
ADOREMUS

This is my Body

by Fr Denis Blackledge SJ

Family? I'll tell you what family means to me, says Jesus. They think he's gone mad or is, even worse, possessed by an evil spirit, because he goes beyond the understanding of the close clan mentality. It comes to something when his own family thinks he's lost it and is out of his mind.

Not just his own family, but the Jewish authorities accuse him of evil spirit possession: after all, he's been healing folk and claiming to forgive sins. And only God can do that! This is the only time in scripture that Beelzebul is mentioned, alleging that Jesus casts out evil spirits by diabolical intervention. Jesus comes back fiercely, showing them the illogicality of their thinking, and



It's worth it!

pronouncing on the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit.

What Jesus is doing is beginning to teach a new meaning of family, which goes beyond their accepted version. No longer does it matter about blood relationship, tribe, whatever. What matters is that anyone who does the will of the Father of Jesus is deemed by Jesus to be brother, sister, mother.

This radical fresh sense of belonging opens new avenues for us right now. So often we live with notions about insiders and outsiders. Just as Jesus broke new ground which shocked and led to serious name-calling, so if you and I dare to be different, to go beyond immediate family, colour of skin, or religion, or whatever, no doubt we'll get the same treatment as Jesus and meet with criticism and rejection. But it'll be worth that cost!

Fr Denis Blackledge SJ is parish priest of St Francis Xavier, Liverpool. He was Religious Adviser to Sean Bean for the BBC1 series Broken.

Body broken for you

by Sr Thérèse Garman SMP

The Eucharist is Christ's self-gift to his disciples. This communion, however, does not stop around the Eucharistic table. At the end of Mass, we are sent out as missionaries of the Eucharist. It calls for extraordinary courage and profound faith to become body given, blood poured out for others. The Eucharist overflows into life in the form of generosity, kindness, forgiveness, sincerity... It urges us to go towards the marginalised, minority communities and underprivileged. The Eucharist becomes "mission" when, through us, it brings healing to emotionally hurt individuals, broken families and fragmented societies. It reveals the face of Christ to persons who have never encountered him.

Am I ready to be this gift for our world's hurting and lost people? Receiving communion is more than a remembrance. It's a time of giving to others the very thing we have received, of being Eucharist for them. We have freely received. Now we must freely give.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence.

Loving Lord, it takes time and effort to be open to the needs of other people. It's much easier to look the other way. Teach me, Lord, to be sensitive and caring. Amen.

The perfect meal

by Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Bonnie Prince Charlie and his elder brother and future cardinal, Henry Stuart, were baptised in the church of the Twelve Apostles (Ss Apostoli) in Rome.

Directly underneath the high altar, the ancient crypt enshrines the tomb of the apostles Philip and James. These early "house church" frescoes witness a deeply Christian faith that stood firm amidst brutal persecution. Who but the early Christians would recognise the picture of a patrician mother and child as Mary and Jesus in Roman dress? Is this one of the earliest representations of the Epiphany? Who else would understand and recognise the symbolism of the vine and the branches, fish, pelican and the Good Shepherd?

But wait... The Last Supper

resembles a small dinner party for only seven people. Jesus had more than six disciples. Were the persecuted early Christians secretly declaring another Eucharistic truth? Seven was a "perfect number". This meal was perfect. Jesus, set apart from his six guests, was also its centre. This was Eucharist!

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

“ We become what we receive: the Body of Christ. In this body there is no room for the indifference which so often seems to possess our hearts. For whoever is of Christ, belongs to one body, and in him we cannot be indifferent to one another.

Pope Francis

Today:
Exodus 24:3-8
Hebrews 9:11-15
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Monday:
2 Peter 1:2-7
Mark 12:1-12

Tuesday:
2 Peter 3:11-15, 17-18
Mark 12:13-17

Wednesday:
2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12
Mark 12:18-27

Thursday:
2 Timothy 2:8-15
Mark 12:28-34

Friday:
Hosea 11:1, 3-4, 8-9
Ephesians 3:8-12, 14-19
John 19:31-37

Saturday (E):
Isaiah 61:9-11
Luke 2:41-51

Saturday (S):
St Columba (Feast):
Colossians 1:24-29
Mark 10:17-30

Next Sunday:
Genesis 3:9-15
2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1
Mark 3:20-35