

SUNDAY PLUS



Shine!

A Year of the Word

Affirmation

by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

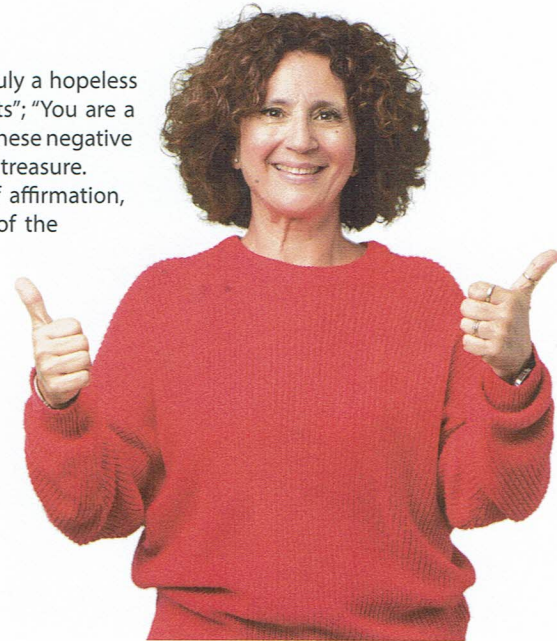
When I was a novice in Perth, Scotland, the novice master was an accomplished musician by the name of Fr Edward Lumley-Holmes. He was very keen that all twelve novices would form a choir. I went to see him privately to share the sad news that I could not sing a note. He said, "Nonsense, Brother, everyone can sing." He picked up a hymn book, chose a popular hymn and told me to sing the first verse. I did. Then he said, "Gosh, you're right!" I was excused choir practice for the year.

I was delighted with his affirmation and I did not see it as negative. Sometimes people are haunted by the negative voices of teachers from their childhood who said things like: "You

will never amount to anything"; "You are truly a hopeless case"; "You will never be any good at sports"; "You are a mobile disaster". And sometimes we replay these negative voices in our heads as if they were words to treasure.

In today's Gospel Jesus goes the way of affirmation, saying to his disciples: "You are the light of the world, so shine." He helps his disciples to grow in confidence by affirming them. Think, dear friends, of the people and voices in our own lives who encouraged us, those who lived out a stubborn hope that we would be someone to make a difference in life; the people who said to us: "Go on, you can do it! Go ahead." The people who help us to grow are the ones who voice their belief in us.

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



Walk in the light

by Catherine Pepinster

Anyone who visits a desert at night will understand why the Bible, written by desert peoples, is so full of metaphors about darkness and light. In the developed world we rarely experience the pitch blackness of the night and the wonder people feel as the sun comes up again. When Isaiah says your light will shine like the dawn, he is emphasising the miraculous transformation that service – whether sharing your bread, or sheltering the homeless – will make to other people. It's an exhortation that rings through Jesus' teaching as well: that following Christ is to offer hospitality to the people that surround us. Christ's coming ensured that the people who walked in darkness would see light and, in turn, his followers become the shining light. Matthew confirms that the Christian life is about not

just faith, but good works too, for the sake of others and for God's glory.

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of *The Tablet* and the author of *The Keys and the Kingdom - the British and the papacy from John Paul II to Francis*, published by T&T Clark.

Loving Lord,
watch over, protect
and bless those
people whose
lives are darkened
by suffering. Be
close to all who are
hurting, discouraged
and lonely. Light
up their lives. Help
me to be your small
light in my own little
world ☩ Amen.

Everyone is a star

by Mary Bell

It is so important to celebrate the gifts of every child. Academic success seems to be the touchstone of achievement in our society but every parent, every teacher, knows that this is only a fragment of the story. Look at the walls of any primary school and appreciate the glowing colours of the children's art. Stand on the touchline of school pitches or courts (as many of us have done) and marvel at the skilful ball

control of youngsters irrespective of IQ. Listen to marvellous school choirs and orchestras: many a school drama production has outshone the professionals. We are able to witness and enjoy an astonishing variety of burgeoning talents.

It is vital not to be dismissive or negative in our attitude towards young people. They are the future. Every last one of them is valuable for themselves whatever their accomplishments. Let us therefore encourage and celebrate them all.

Mary Bell is a grandmother and a retired teacher who continues to use her skills in the University of the Third Age.

"Those who have encountered Jesus have experienced the miracle of light that pierces the darkness and know this light that illuminates and brightens... Above all, I would like to say to those who have lost the strength to seek, who are tired, to those who, overwhelmed by the darkness of life, have extinguished this yearning: arise, take heart, the light of Jesus can overcome the deepest darkness. Arise, take heart!"

Pope Francis

Today:
Isaiah 58:7-10
1 Corinthians 2:1-5
Matthew 5:13-16

Monday:
1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday:
1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday:
1 Kings 10:1-10
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday:
1 Kings 11:4-11
Mark 7:24-30

Friday:
1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday:
1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34
Mark 8:1-10

Next Sunday:
Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Matthew 5:17-37

