

## PLUS



More than many sparrows

A Year of the Word



# Challenged by hair and sparrows

by Phil Ferguson

**H**ave you ever tried to count the number of hairs on your head? Even people with a shortage of hair might find themselves challenged.

Apparently the average person has approximately 100,000 hair follicles on their scalp, but the number varies with hair colour, blondes having more and redheads, fewer. Men's hair tends to grow faster than women's and we all lose an estimated 50-150 hairs each day.

The vast majority of us don't bother to count our daily hair loss, especially as most of us have about 5 million hairs distributed between our heads and bodies, so why should we spend time counting the number of hairs on our heads?

Jesus was making an incredible claim about his Father, who knows, not only the number of hairs on your head, but also on 7.53 billion others. That says something about God's care!

As for sparrows, some estimate that in 1966, there were roughly 30 million sparrows in the UK, a number which has decreased to 10 million – but how do we even begin to think of counting 10 million sparrows? Yet Jesus said that not one falls to the ground without God knowing about it!

As we celebrate the Day for Life the annual day "dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition", the Gospel is an unmatched statement from Jesus about where we stand in God's eyes. There are 10 million sparrows just in the UK alone and we "are of more value than many sparrows" which God knows individually.

Phil Ferguson is a former teacher.

## So precious!

by Moire O'Sullivan

When my son was born, all I could think about was him. He was so little, so helpless. All I wanted was to protect him.

Within days I knew him intimately; how long he slept, how much he ate, what every little sound he made meant.

When he was sick, I would drop everything in a blind panic to soothe his screams. I would refuse to sleep until he was well again.

I could not wait to share with others the tiniest bit of

news, about his first smile, his first word, his first step. I adored him, and couldn't believe it if others didn't see or feel exactly as I did.

All these reactions were just for one, little innocent child.

There are 7.53 billion people alive in this world. How great a God we have who feels like this, and more, for each and every one of us!

Moire O'Sullivan is a mountain runner, adventure racer, an author, mum and a regular contributor to *Look*, the younger children's Sunday sheet of Gospel-focused activities and games, available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk).

**"We should be comforted by what Jesus tells us: 'There is a Father. There is a Father who loves you. There is a Father who cares for you.'"**

Pope Francis

## What more could we ask?

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Did you know that there are twenty-eight species of "true" sparrows? It is described as the world's most common bird even if, in Britain, its numbers seem to be in decline. In fact the sparrow is so familiar – even to small children – that it is easily

overlooked. Somehow we marvel at the glorious colours of the goldfinch, the song of the blackbird, the "dancing clouds" of starlings, the powerful dive of the red kite, and miss the unspectacular brown bird which chooses to live close to human beings.

Jesus knew all about sparrows. He saw them everywhere he went – and yet he didn't take them for granted. That's why he used them as an example when he described his Father's love for each one of us. He was saying that we don't need to be big and influential, colourful or great achievers for God to notice us – and if God loves each sparrow, we are even more important and unforgettable. What more could we ask?

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

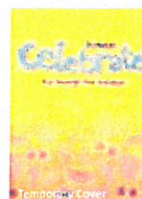
Lord, apparently there are now fewer sparrows around than there used to be. That makes each one increasingly precious. It's easy to take a sparrow for granted and yet, if we lose sight of the little things in life, we are the poorer. Lord, there are 7.53 billion people in this world, but there is only one of me. Thank you for noticing me and loving me. 🙏 Amen.

Celebrate: Summer  
Magazine

Fun through the holidays

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A new magazine for kids full of cool puzzles and fun quizzes. Celebrate: Summer comes with a six-week summer calendar and activity sheet for even more things to do through the school holidays.

Today:  
Jeremiah 20:10-13  
Romans 5:12-15  
Matthew 10:26-33

Monday:  
2 Kings 17:5-8  
13-15, 18  
Matthew 7:1-5

Monday (E):  
2 Maccabees  
6:18, 21, 24-31  
Matthew 24:4-13

Tuesday:  
2 Kings 19:9-11,  
14-21, 31-35, 36  
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday:  
Isaiah 49:1-6  
Acts 13:22-26  
Luke 1:57-66, 80

Thursday:  
2 Kings 24:8-17  
Matthew 7:21-29

Friday:  
2 Kings 25:1-12  
Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday:  
Lamentations  
2:2, 10-14, 18-19  
Matthew 8:5-17

Next Sunday:  
Acts 12:1-11  
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-19  
Matthew 16:13-19

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