

PLUS



Feed the hungry

A Year of the Word

Respond with compassion



by Claire Wright

When you have young children, you can truly empathise with Jesus in today's Gospel. Just as you pour a cup of tea, or sit down to read, or shut your eyes for a minute, the inner radar in your children switches on and before you know it, your sleeves are tugged, body prodded and shouts of "muuuuuuummy" follow you down the stairs.

I always admire Jesus' patience in this passage. When my children have had yet another two seconds to themselves before coming to find me, I find my temper wearing thin and the desperate desire to

go to a "deserted place" grows strong. But when the crowds followed Jesus to his, he responded with compassion. He tended to their scrapes, listened to the whining and when their hunger grew, he fed them.

As parents (or siblings, children, friends) we can lose ourselves in the craziness of family life and forget that what we are doing, what we are called to do, is sacred. We daily have the opportunity to live as Jesus lived by caring for our "crowds", those he has entrusted to us to "feed", physically, and spiritually.

Claire Wright is a Brighton-based freelance writer who runs a faith blog and a healthy family food website, all while taking care of two lively toddlers.

Don't wait to be asked

by Moire O'Sullivan

We all have something we'd like to change. Perhaps we want to be thinner, fitter, wiser. Maybe we dream of having a different career, home or lifestyle.

Change is hard. It can be overwhelming, confusing, tiring. We can convince ourselves it can't be done.

But what if we just take the first step, even a little one? What if we eat that salad, go for a walk, email in that CV, pick up a book?

The disciples only produced a meagre five loaves and two fishes, a token gesture, but it was enough for Jesus to take it from there to feed a whole five thousand.

Maybe God will reward us for

our initiative, help us to take our dreams one step further. Maybe God will grant us more confidence, more drive, more support from those around us so that we can really make that change we want in our lives.

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.

Loving Lord, help me to recognise ways in which I can share what I have with people who, in some way, have less than I do. Most of all, Lord, let me give of myself and my time. Amen.

"I am thinking about the many hungry people and how much leftover food we throw away... Let each of us think about this: where does the food that is left over from lunch go, from dinner, where does it go? What is done with the leftover food in my house? Is it thrown away?... Never throw away leftover food."

Pope Francis

A different kind of hunger

by Michael George

"There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves," Jesus instructed his disciples. To feed the hungry is a corporal work of mercy; Jesus' instruction was not just for his disciples standing amongst the crowd of five thousand, but was for all of us.

Providing food to the hungry certainly does mean responding to the needs of those who do not have

enough to eat, but it also means recognition of a spiritual hunger. We are called to address our own spiritual hunger and to seek to feed others who hunger spiritually by helping them to become closer to Jesus, as Jesus tells us we cannot be nourished and "full" without him.

Today's Gospel reminds us that with Jesus, all things are possible. It reminds us of our duty to serve, and it encourages us to use initiative, whilst placing all our trust in him.

Following more than twenty years as a teacher and headteacher, Michael George has recently started work as a lay school chaplain.

Today:
Isaiah 55:1-3
Romans 8:35, 37-39
Matthew 14:13-21

Monday:
Jeremiah 28:1-17
Matthew 14:22-36

Tuesday:
Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22
Matthew 15:1-2, 10-14

Wednesday:
Jeremiah 31:1-7
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday:
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
2 Peter 1:16-19
Matthew 17:1-9

Friday:
Nahum 2:1, 3; 3:1-3, 6-7
Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday:
Habakkuk 1:12-2, 4
Matthew 17:14-20

Next Sunday:
1 Kings 19:9, 11-13
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:22-33

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