

SUNDAY PLUS

Feed your soul

What are the alternatives?

by Eldred Willey

Kiko Argüello grew up in the lap of luxury in Madrid with a father who saw money as the centre of life. As a 20-year-old student he won the biggest prize ever awarded in an art competition in Spain, and he launched into a lifestyle which was as wild as his atheism was doctrinaire. Yet he had an increasingly intolerable conviction that life was absurd. Stepping aside one day into a church, he cried out: "I don't know who you are, but help me." Then, taking a guitar and Bible, he went to live in a tiny shack in Spain's worst shanty, sleeping on a straw mat amid a pack of stray dogs.

In today's Gospel we pick up the story where Jesus has already turned his back on the

deceitfulness of riches, and has rejected the temptation to conjure up bread for himself. Now he is faced with a new temptation. "If you are the new Moses," taunts the crowd, "then conjure up bread for us." His team is looking on and he is wondering how many of them will stay with the programme when he is so obviously not meeting expectations.

Encountering the mystery of misery, and hearing the clamour of the hungry to get bread from anywhere can be the catalyst for launching a spiritual movement. "When you go to live among the poor," wrote Kiko, "either you lose your faith and become a guerrilla like Che Guevara, or you remain in silence before the Cross and become a saint."

Eldred Willey works as a communications officer for the Diocese of East Anglia.



Kiko Arguello in 2006 / commons.wikimedia.org

Food for life

by Linda Jones

Do you sometimes find yourself making toast for breakfast, then turning around five minutes later to make sandwiches for lunch? Bread is certainly an important part of my day!

Feeding a family is hard work and it's not cheap. It can leave us without much time to think about other things.

Today we hear that Jesus knows some people followed him because they'd seen amazing things - like the feeding of the five thousand. They thought they'd never go hungry again so it's understandable!

But Jesus is asking us to open our minds and look beyond our immediate needs.

If we have enough food, what else is important?

As well as bread, we need love. We need strong, healthy relationships with our family, our neighbours, the earth and God. Can we find some time to take care of a neighbour in need, or to pray, or to listen to someone who needs us?

Linda Jones is head of the CAFOD Theology Programme and a regular contributor to Redemptorist Publications' *Living Word* and *Weekday Living Word*.

Dear Lord, help me to strike the balance. Let me see my true priorities in life and to keep you in mind in everything that I say, think and do. ☩ Amen.

Food that lasts

by Claire Wright

Myquillyn Smith, the blogger behind *thenester.com*, teamed up with Compassion International to visit some of the children they sponsor in Tanzania. She went to visit a young boy in his home town.

The boy she had come to see, Topiwo, brought her to his family home, a windowless two-room hut made from animal dung. She was humbled by the pride with which he showed her his house, and spotted a message he'd scrawled across the side of the hut which someone translated: "The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need."

When I first heard this story, my heart stopped. He'd "got it". This fifteen-year-old who lived in abject

poverty halfway across the world had got it.

Most of us will never know true physical hunger. But all of us know what it feels like to be spiritually hungry and to think we know better than God what our life should look like.

We have everything we need, when all we have left is God.

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.

"Every Christian can witness to God in the workplace, not only with words, but above all, with an honest life."

Pope Francis

Today:
Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15
Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
John 6:24-35

Monday:
Numbers 11:4-15
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday:
Numbers 12:1-13
Matthew 14:22-36

Wednesday:
Numbers 13:1-2, 25
– 14:1, 26-29, 34-35
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday:
Numbers 20:1-13
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday:
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
2 Peter 1:16-19
Mark 9:2-10

Saturday:
Deuteronomy 6:4-13
Matthew 17:14-20

Next Sunday:
1 Kings 19:4-8
Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2
John 6:41-51