

SUNDAY PLUS

King and centre of hearts



by Sr Janet Fearn
FMDM

Who loved him and whom did he love – really love? What did he think as he travelled from country to country, longing for former friends to offer a compassionate refuge instead of rejecting a powerless ex-monarch? The Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, died in exile in a foreign land on 27

July 1980, aged sixty, apparently with a bag of Iranian soil beneath his bed.

Like us, he had reflected on his successes and failures. He commented, "I calculated the amount of time I spent with my father during my entire life... the total amount of time I had with him, if you add up the hours, was about two months. My father was a busy man... we had very few opportunities to really sit down and talk as father and son."

The feast of Christ the King reminds us of the crucified Jesus, agonisingly suspended between heaven and earth but dying without

regrets. Jesus and his Father were and are inseparable. He declared, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... I am in the Father and the Father is in me".

Jesus returned to the Father marked by the wounds of love which Pilate was unwilling to earn. He recognised Jesus' innocence but wanted earthly power and Caesar's approval. He asked, "Truth?... What is that?" but

failed to see the answer: unstinting, all-consuming, uncompromising love.

Countless millions of people, past, present and to come, regard Jesus as the king and centre of their hearts. To give and receive his love has been, is and will be their goal. His love changes everything.

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

His love changes everything

On children

by Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet*

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.

Feast of the week

Monday 22 November

St Cecilia (200-230)

Christians found life tough during the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Severus Alexander. Christians talked about the kingdom of God at a time when the emperor and the State were paramount. Dangerous!

Cecilia? Many of the stories surrounding her life are very unlikely. What seems to be true is that she was a young Christian woman who suffered two botched attempts to execute her. She didn't drown

and the executioner not only failed to decapitate her with a sword: he also ran away in shame.

Critically injured, Cecilia survived for three days, but used the time before her death to give all she had to the poor. She apparently died singing hymns.

Cecilia was initially buried in Rome's Catacombs of San Callisto but, in 821, was exhumed and her body moved to the church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, built above what is thought to have been the location of her home. She subsequently became the patroness of music and musicians.

"Truth, according to the Christian faith, is God's love for us in Jesus Christ. Therefore, truth is a relationship."

Pope Francis

Lord God, watch over children and young people. Be with them in their moments of happiness and sadness, enthusiasm and friendships. Let their hopes and dreams inspire and lighten the world in which they live. Amen.

Today:
Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37

Monday:
Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20
Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday:
Daniel 2:31-45
Luke 21:5-11

Wednesday:
Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28
Luke 21:12-19

Thursday:
Daniel 6:12-28
Luke 21:20-28

Friday:
Daniel 7:2-14
Luke 21:29-33

Saturday:
Daniel 7:15-27
Luke 21:34-36

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 33:14-16
1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2
Luke 21:25-28, 34-36