

SUNDAY PLUS

To serve, not to be served

Make someone else happy

By Michael George

Years ago, when I was first appointed a headteacher, my first action was to remove the sign in the car park, immediately by the front door, that designated a parking space as reserved for my use only. I was the only member of staff with such a reserved spot and it did not sit right with me that I should be treated differently to others, by virtue of my role within the school. To me, removing the sign demonstrated that although I was the school's leader, I was not more important than anybody else.



At school we tried to make it our mission that everybody who came to the school would leave it happier than when they arrived – whether they were a pupil or a parent, the bishop, the person delivering the milk or the post, an inspector, a contractor, or a member of staff. Whoever the person, and whatever their reason for coming to the school, it was our mission to be to them the face of Christ.

Jesus modelled servant leadership throughout his ministry. By calling children and by washing feet he modelled humility rather than self-importance. We are called to follow his example.

Recently some children and I sat and discussed “What makes us happy?” As so often, the children's words were wise and provide a fitting summary, articulating that the answer lies in humility and service of others, rather than thinking about ourselves: “We are happiest when we know that we have made someone else happy.”

Michael George has served Catholic primary schools as a teacher and headteacher for more than twenty years.

This is called serving, this is the joy of the Church: to go a step further, always; to go further and give life.

Pope Francis

Reach out

By John Crone

In composer Graham Kendrick's lovely hymn, *The Servant King*, there's a verse that runs “So let us learn how to serve and in our lives enthrone him. Each other's needs to prefer, for it is Christ we are serving”. Just before his death, St Francis of Assisi recalled how, in his youth, the sight of people with leprosy horrified him. Then God drew him into

their company and he began to look after these outcasts, and what was horrifying became transformed into a source of joy in body and soul. For Francis, perhaps like few others, realised clearly that what was done to the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters was done to Jesus himself. And as Jesus came to serve us, even to giving his life for us, Francis thought we should try to do the same for others. Jesus still identifies himself with the outcasts of our day.

John Crone is a regular contributor to Living Word and Weekday Living Word, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Lord, help me to live this day, quietly, easily;
to lean on your great strength, trustfully, respectfully;
to wait for the unfolding of your will, patiently, serenely;
to meet others, peacefully, joyfully;
to face tomorrow, confidently, courageously. ✚ Amen.

St Francis of Assisi

Feast of the week
Saturday 1 October

St Francis
of Assisi
(1181-1226)

[Francis] was with a party of young men, singing in the streets after a banquet, when he stopped suddenly and, as if lifted outside himself by a wonderful vision, turned to his companions who had asked him if he was thinking of getting married and quickly replied, with some warmth, that they had guessed rightly because he proposed to take a spouse, and no-one

more noble, more rich, more beautiful than she could possibly be found, meaning by these words poverty or the religious state which is founded on the profession of poverty. In fact, he had learned from Our Lord Jesus Christ who, “although he was rich, made himself poor for us” that we, too, should become rich by his poverty... For Christ has said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit; if thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come follow me.”

Pope Pius XI

Today:
Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4
2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14
Luke 17:5-10

Monday:
Galatians 1:6-12
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday:
Galatians 1:13-24
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday:
Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday:
Galatians 3:1-5
Luke 11:5-13

Friday:
Galatians 3:7-14
Luke 11:15-26

Saturday:
Galatians 3:22-29
Luke 11:27-28

Next Sunday:
2 Kings 5:14-17
2 Timothy 2:8-13
Luke 17:11-19