

SUNDAY PLUS

Look beyond the material

Bread and roses

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

“As we go marching, marching,
We battle too for men
For they are women’s children
And we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes.
Hearts starve as well as bodies.
Give us bread, but give us roses.”

People don’t just need bread. They need something more. In the words of a wonderful song by Judy Collins:

“Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes.
Hearts starve as well as bodies,
Bread and roses, bread and roses!”

When, in 1912, mill owners cut the hours and wages of immigrant textile workers in Massachusetts, they hadn’t bargained for the response of the women, who refused to stay silent. They wanted more than bread. Their words echoed the words of Jesus in today’s Gospel: people cannot survive on bread alone – “Hearts starve as well as bodies.”


But we found this out, didn’t we, during the Covid-19 pandemic, a dark cloud with many silver linings. It left none of us unscathed and we can all think of our own tragedies and challenges. Yet we can also look back on moments of light and insight. We examined and evaluated our priorities. Some stayed at the top



of the list. Others plummeted to the bottom as we realised their unimportance. How many of us rediscovered the importance of family time, of the countryside, of laughter, of simple things

that had gradually slipped out of sight under work and time pressures? We rediscovered the roses in our lives.

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

Lord of life, you knew how to get your priorities right. We need bread but we also need roses. We need to live, not just exist. Help us to work for justice for all those who suffer injustice.  Amen.

Cherish what is

By Lucy Russell

“Stand still, Ed. You’re driving me crazy!” James was four, Edgar eighteen months. I had dashed in from the shops with the boys and left them safely in the front room while I nipped up to the bathroom. I could hear James from upstairs. When I came down, a minute later, he had undone the toggles on Edgar’s coat and taken it off for him, along with his hat. His actions said something, just at the right moment, about how he was growing. He’d helped me out without me asking him to. It was beautiful, but it also underlined that this phase wouldn’t last forever. We needed to enjoy the boys while they were little. James is doing his GCSEs this year and becoming increasingly independent. While I do my best to encourage this and make myself redundant, I cherish my teenagers as much as I can. This phase won’t last either.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of Who Do You Say You Are?, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Feast of the week
Saturday 12 March

Bl Rutilio Grande
García SJ (1928-1977)

The Archbishop of El Salvador, Oscar Romero, might not have become a martyr for social justice and a saint had it not been for the influence and assassination of his close friend Fr Rutilio Grande García SJ. Rutilio Grande’s death transformed Romero from a quiet, bookish, predictable archbishop into someone who was also a voice for the voiceless, impoverished, oppressed people of El Salvador.

Grande worked long and hard for social transformation through the creation of Basic Christian Communities, which led people to come together to share and live the Gospel – but in criticising the unjust political system, he made enemies of the authorities.

A death squad ambushed Grande’s vehicle. He was shot twelve times. An elderly man who tried to shield the priest was also killed, as was a 16-year-old boy.

At the funeral, Romero declared, “The true reason for [Grande’s] death was his prophetic and pastoral efforts to raise the consciousness of the people throughout his parish.”

“We all know about Archbishop Romero’s friendship with Father Rutilio Grande, and how much he was affected by his assassination. It seared his heart as a man, a priest and a pastor. Romero was no human resources manager; that was not how he dealt with individuals or organisations, but as a father, a friend and a brother. He can serve as a yardstick, however daunting, to help us measure our own hearts...”

Pope Francis

Today:
Deuteronomy 26:4-10
Romans 10:8-13
Luke 4:1-13

Monday:
Leviticus 19:1-2, 11-18
Matthew 25:31-46

Tuesday:
Isaiah 55:10-11
Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday:
Jonah 3:1-10
Luke 11:29-32

Thursday:
Esther 4:17
Matthew 7:7-12
(S) St John Ogilvie

(Feast):
Isaiah 50:5-9
2 Corinthians 1:3-7
John 12:24-26

Friday:
Ezekiel 18:21-28
Matthew 5:20-26

Saturday:
Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Matthew 5:43-48

Next Sunday:
Genesis 15:5-12, 17-18
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 9:28-36