

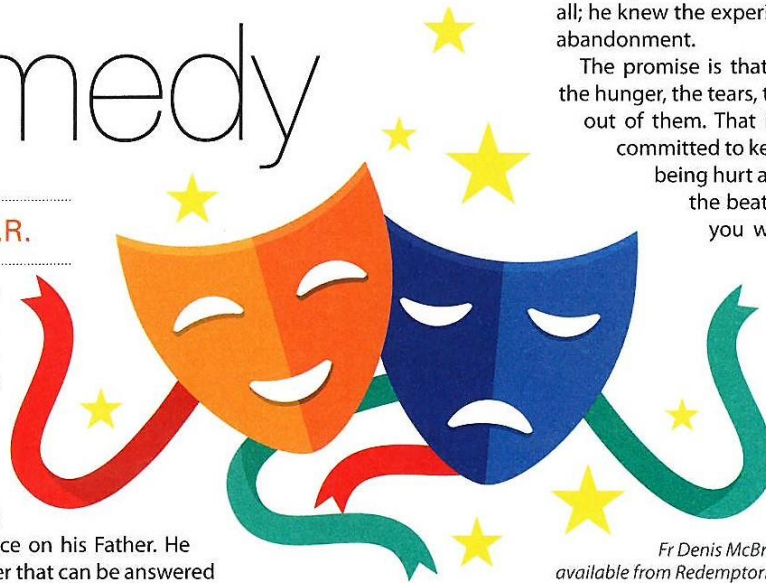
# SUNDAY PLUS

Find happiness

## The promise of comedy

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

The best commentary on Jesus' Beatitudes is Jesus' own life. Jesus did not live his life *as if* he were blessed by God; he lived out his life in the constant awareness that God did indeed bless him. During that life he experienced poverty, not only the poverty of deprivation, but the poverty of standing alone against the crowds, the poverty of total reliance on his Father. He experienced hunger: not just the hunger that can be answered



by bread, but the hunger that can only be satisfied by doing what is right. He had reason to weep and mourn, not only at the loss of a dear friend but also at the lost opportunities of his own people. He was no stranger to being held up as a clown for the amusement of all; he knew the experience of rejection, betrayal and abandonment.

The promise is that God can handle the poverty, the hunger, the tears, the rejection - lifting his people out of them. That is the Good News. God is not committed to keeping his people at the level of being hurt and wounded - if that were true the beatitude would read, "Blessed are you who weep, for you shall weep even more." The vision of the God of the beatitudes is the vision of a generous God, one who reverses the tragedy. "Blessed are you who weep" is the tragedy; "for you shall laugh" is the comedy. And it is the comedy, not the tragedy, which is the promise.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk).

## No recipe for happiness

By Mary Bell

Sister Dominique helped run a mission in Chad during years of famine and civil war supplying prosthetics to people who had lost limbs from gunshot wounds and infected ulcers. She came to speak to our pupils about the work of the mission, bringing some of the simple artefacts from the villagers' daily lives. She explained that the children were issued with one piece of paper, a pencil and an eraser and had to make that do for all their daily lessons. A family would have only one basic meal a day. Yet, she insisted, these people were incredibly cheerful and loved to laugh, sing and dance. She pointed out that in our society with all its material advantages many people are unhappy and depressed.

There is no recipe for happiness. It is an attitude of mind, a willingness to find the best in whatever is available.

Sister Dominique couldn't wait to get back to Africa.

Mary Bell, a retired teacher, is also a mother, grandmother and a regular contributor to the *University of the Third Age*, u3a.

"Thinking about God's patience is wonderful! How the Lord always waits for us; he is always beside us to help us; but he respects our freedom. And he anxiously awaits our "yes", so as to welcome us anew in his fatherly arms and to fill us with his boundless mercy."

Pope Francis

Feast of the week  
Wednesday 16 February

## Our Lady of the Thorn

On 24 March 1400, a group of shepherds saw a bright light near the chapel of St John the Baptist near Chalons, France. Investigating, they found a burning thorn bush and, in its midst, a statue of Our Lady holding the infant and, in her right hand, a lily. Neither the statue nor the bush was damaged by the flames.

Watched by a large crowd of

people from the local villages, the fire burned throughout the night and the following day, the feast of the annunciation. When the fire died down, the bishop of Chalons, Charles of Poitiers, who had also witnessed the burning bush and the miraculous statue - both still unaffected by the fire - carefully retrieved the statue and placed it inside the chapel.

A church, Our Lady of the Thorn, built over the site of the miracle, quickly became a place of pilgrimage. St Joan of Arc is said to have visited the church in 1429, two years before her death.

Today:  
Jeremiah 17:5-8  
1 Corinthians  
15:12, 16-20

Monday:  
James 1:1-11  
Mark 8:11-13

Tuesday:  
James 1:12-18  
Mark 8:14-21

Wednesday:  
James 1:19-27  
Mark 8:22-26

Thursday:  
James 2:1-9  
Mark 8:27-33

Friday:  
James 2:14-24, 26  
Mark 8:34 - 9:1

Saturday:  
James 3:1-10  
Mark 9:2-13

Next Sunday:  
1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23  
1 Corinthians 15:45-49  
Luke 6:27-38