

# SUNDAY PLUS

The goodness within you

## Soul gardener



By Fr Royston Price  
C.Ss.R.

Lent is approaching quickly, and the readings at Mass today are certainly challenging us to focus on what is important. The death and resurrection of Jesus are utterly unique, and the result of God's overwhelming love for us, as well as being the perfect image of that love. How do we respond to that? Just as sunshine through a glass window makes

very clear the areas that need to be cleaned, so it is with the light of God, shining into my soul. An honest and frank appraisal of where I am on my spiritual journey with the Lord, recognising the parts that need healing and improvement, is a keyway in which to grow in my relationship with God.

In the language of Luke, it's important to recognise the parts of my life that aren't bearing good fruit, but also the parts that are. Our spiritual life is like a garden, with Jesus walking among the plants, full of delight to be there. He's the gardener, nurturing the seedlings

of virtue, pruning and training our character, and weeding out that which shouldn't be there. That's how we become saints, by letting the Lord be at work in us. It's a hidden, quiet process, but like the flowers starting to poke up through the soil, the divine life is active, changing and growing within, until evidence of it bursts forth like blossom and fruit. This Lent, may we cooperate with Christ the divine gardener in the cultivation of our interior life orchard bearing delicious fruit.

Fr Royston Price is the Vocations Director for the London Province of the Redemptorists.

## Work experience

By James Gallogly

When you were young did your parents ensure you went to school? Did they encourage regular mealtimes, good sleep patterns and completed homework? If so, they have contributed significantly to the position you currently hold in society.

Imagine if they hadn't done any of those things. How well do you think you might have fared? Personally, I dread to think.

There is a store of goodness in every heart. Some try to hide it, that's true; others had no idea it was there in the first place. Given the opportunity to seek it and actually make use of it is revelatory for those who have lived a loveless life of mistreatment.

In the prison system, many men and women are hardworking and exemplary employees. The experience of work, the challenge to succeed and the reward of appreciation are life-changing. Finally, they can see purpose: no longer are they labouring in vain.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic chaplain in a UK prison.

Feast of the week  
Tuesday 1 February

St David of Wales  
(500-589)

The birth of St David is the stuff of legends! To summarise: it was apparently foretold to St Patrick (born nearby) 100 years before David was born on a Pembroke cliff, during a storm, to a mother (Non) who subsequently became a nun and eventually canonised herself! Both David's parents were descended from Welsh royalty and some of his supporters also claim that he was King Arthur's nephew...

What is certain is that, as an adult, David became a monk and eventually Archbishop of Wales, founding twelve monasteries, including Menevia (St David's) and Glastonbury. The communities led prayerful, hospitable, very austere lives, for instance, pulling the plough themselves rather than using animals.

David's last words were: "Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith and do the little things that you have seen and heard with me."

In 1120, Pope Callistus II canonised David who, shortly afterwards, was declared the patron saint of Wales.

"We need to stop and ask ourselves what has led our world to see conflict as something normal, and how our hearts can be converted and our ways of thinking changed, in order to work for true peace in solidarity and fraternity."

Pope Francis

Lord God, may whatever I say, think and do today be the fruit of my love for you.  Amen.

Today:  
Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7  
1 Corinthians 15:54-58  
Luke 6:39-45

Monday:  
1 Peter 1:3-9  
Mark 10:17-27

Tuesday:  
1 Peter 1:10-16  
Mark 10:28-31

(E&W) St David:  
Philippians 3:8-14  
Matthew 5:13-16

Wednesday:  
Joel 2:12-18  
2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2  
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday:  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20  
Luke 9:22-25

Friday:  
Isaiah 58:1-9  
Matthew 9:14-15

Saturday:  
Isaiah 58:9-14  
Luke 5:27-32

Next Sunday:  
Deuteronomy 26:4-10  
Romans 10:8-13  
Luke 4:1-13