

SUNDAY PLUS

Party invitations

A kingdom for the overlooked



others hop; the blind who have to feel for the warmth of a fire they cannot see; the lonely who are never invited anywhere. These are the ones who are led to the seats of honour in the kingdom; the little people who cannot return the invitations and are hungry for the food and the company that table fellowship can bring. Jesus has a *credo* that hugs these people into importance.

In the upside-down world of the fairy tale and the Gospel there is a wisdom of reversal: behind what appears to be ugliness there is beauty; behind what appears to be foolishness there is wisdom; behind the faces of the scarred and the broken there is great dignity. Jesus keeps God's preference for the little people at the forefront of his teaching. He has the kind of love that sees beyond appearances, the kind of love that pierces disguises, the kind of love that calls people out of imprisonment. His love dignifies people. He asks that our love does too.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

When Jesus addresses his host in today's Gospel he advocates a more radical style of hospitality by associating with "the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind".

The guest list for Jesus' feast is a parable of the kingdom: God is the eccentric host whose delight is to feast with those who are always overlooked in a society that scrambles for honour.

So the guest list includes the old lady in the moth-eaten coat who carries her kingdom in plastic bags; those who slowly hobble where

Welcome guaranteed

By Michael George

A great privilege of working in schools has been being able to welcome parents and other friends to Masses and other acts of worship. Invariably the school hall has not been large enough to seat all the people who have responded to the invitation to come. In some sense this brought regret, that we were unable to offer everyone a comfortable seat, or even

a view. From a practical perspective it would be easy for a guest to feel short-changed when, having responded to an invitation, they found themselves standing in the doorway. The more powerful sense though, is of delight that so many people wanted to come and share in the feast and that, despite the challenges, we turned no-one away and welcomed everybody. The walls of the building provided physical constraints, but there are no such constraints with the capacity of the heart – no-one needs to feel short-changed.

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

"Make a welcoming and available space so that all the minors of your time may enter into your life: the marginalised, men and women who live on our streets, in parks and stations; the thousands of unemployed, young and adults; many sick people who have no access to adequate care; many abandoned elderly; mistreated women; migrants in search of a worthy life; all those who live in the existential peripheries, deprived of dignity and also of the light of the Gospel."

Pope Francis


Feast of the week
Monday 29 August

The Passion of St John the Baptist

He died because he spoke the truth to power and got people's backs up. He died because someone in authority wanted to save face and didn't have the courage to refuse the unjust demands of a dancing girl. He died because a woman wanted the ultimate revenge.

It was a crazy request. Salome could have had anything she wanted: position, power, riches...

Even a "simple" piece of royal jewellery was normally beyond her imagining. What would she do with a man's head which, at best, would be buried and (hopefully) forgotten? She didn't think that 2000 years later, she would be remembered as a seductive accessory to murder, her dancing skills recalled as a murder weapon and her good name gone forever. What do we know of Salome outside the part she played in the killing of St John the Baptist? Did she regret listening to her mother? Was she sorry for bringing about the death of an innocent man?

Loving Lord, let me be true to you. Let me love and serve you in your people. May my behaviour never be unjust or cruel. May I never look for revenge in my dealings with others.  Amen.

Today:
Ecclesiasticus 3:17-20, 28-29
Hebrews 12:18-19, 22-24
Luke 14:1, 7-14

Monday:
Jeremiah 1:17-19
Mark 6:17-29

Tuesday:
1 Corinthians 2:10-16
Luke 4:31-37

Wednesday:
1 Corinthians 3:1-9
Luke 4:38-44

Thursday:
1 Corinthians 3:18-23
Luke 5:1-11

Friday:
1 Corinthians 4:1-5
Luke 5:33-39

Saturday:
1 Corinthians 4:6-15
Luke 6:1-5

(E) St Gregory the Great (Feast):
1 Thessalonians 2:2-8
Matthew 16:13-19

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 9:13-18
Philemon 9-10, 12-17
Luke 14:25-33