

SUNDAY PLUS

Love lasts



Love is the key

By Fr Royston Price
C.Ss.R.

In the Gospel reading this week, we see hostility from the people of Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. Jealousy of the success of others can be a poison in the heart, even if never voiced aloud or acted on. If unchecked, from it can flow all sorts of evils, such as defamation, gossip, and slander. St Thomas Aquinas calls jealousy the "mother of hatred", as it gnaws away at harmony in society and personal relationships.

St Paul, however, talks about the antidote to this toxin: Love. Love is never jealous, he tells us, but delights in the good of the other. Love is the supreme rule of the Gospel and the Christian life: it is the key to understanding human existence, the

mission of Christ, and to finding lasting happiness.

To be a Christian is to be drenched in the love of God, which overflows into love of neighbour. This love of neighbour is embodied by practical work, acts that directly help those in need, but all done as part of the great cosmic drama, vital notes in the operatic duet between God and humanity. St Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, spoke frequently about the love of God, and how we respond to that love, because that was the reason Jesus took flesh, to win our hearts for God.

Having won our heart, Jesus dwells there now, transforming us more and more into his likeness, and liberating us from pride, selfishness, and jealousy.

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

A simple love song

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM


What's your favourite love song of all time? Can you remember all the words? Do they sometimes appear unexpectedly, creating lovely warm, fuzzy feelings?

Does your favourite love song conjure up the picture of a face and place, perhaps many years ago? Was it a love which truly lasted forever? Was it a teenage spiningling "happily ever after" moment which, years later, with the benefit of hindsight, is amusing – but still very special?

Perhaps your favourite love songs have no connection with romance but will, instead, always hold a unique place in your heart. Did my beloved late father notice that he always sang the "Salve Regina" when peeling potatoes? My mother always turned the radio or CD player to (painfully) full volume when she wanted to hear Schubert's or Gounod's "Ave Maria".

What is your favourite love song of all time? Take a few minutes to cherish it and thank God for its loveliness.

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

Lord, teach me to imitate the trusting patience of Simeon and of Anna, who waited a lifetime to see Jesus and to bring his light to the whole world. Help me to stand beside people like Mary and Joseph who meet with unexpected pain.  Amen.

"God's call is always love: we have to try to discover the love behind each call, and it should be responded to only with love. This is the language: the response to a call that comes from love is only love."

Pope Francis



Feast of the week
Wednesday 2 February

Presentation of the
Lord in the Temple

The Offering (A Song of Simeon)

Old Man, you've sown the years
longing for the harvest, hoping
for the green shoot to appear.
Fragrant with perfection, he is here:
wanting to be purified, waiting
to be crucified.

And his mother, offering her Lamb,
gives him to your open arms
so you can finally die in peace
knowing that the Promised One is born.
In gratitude you will whisper
that her heart will break.

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Today:
Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13
Luke 4:21-30

Monday:
2 Samuel 15:13-14,
30; 16:5-13
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday:
2 Samuel 18:9-10,
14, 24-25, 30 - 19:3
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday:
Malachi 3:1-4
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

Thursday:
1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12
Mark 6:7-13

Friday:
Ecclesiasticus
47:2-13
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday:
1 Kings 3:4-13
Mark 6:30-34

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 6:1-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11