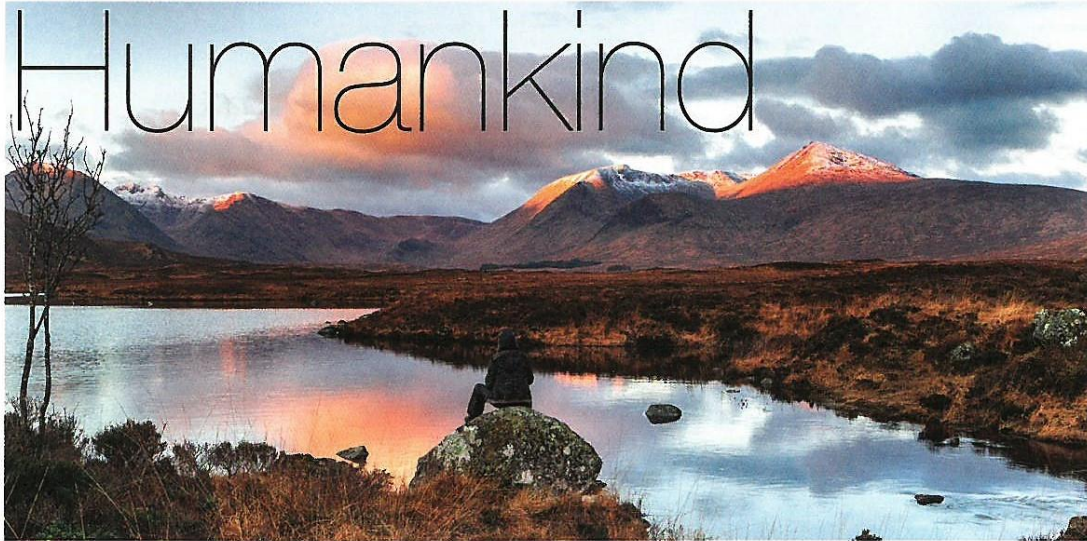


SUNDAY PLUS

Home is where the heart is



By Brian Fahy

"I am going to find a place where nobody can hurt me." These were thoughts of Ken Smith, the hermit of Treig, by Rannoch Moor,

in Scotland. After a night out he had been badly beaten up by a gang of thugs and left for dead. Unconscious from a brain injury for twenty-three days, doctors thought he would never walk or talk again. But Ken came round

and determined ever after to avoid humankind and to find a place he could call home.

He trekked through Canada, walked thousands of miles and finally came to Scotland and Loch Treig. He built himself a log cabin

and has lived there these past forty years, foraging for berries and fishing from the loch. In recent times old age and a stroke meant that he needed the help of others, and he was greatly consoled by the kindness of strangers to him. "In these days", he said, "people have been very good to me": a sharp contrast to the evil day that set him on his journey away from humankind.

Post-traumatic stress is the term we use now to describe this experience. The severe beating that Ken took was an outrageous invasion of his bodily integrity and of his human dignity. The shock of it drove him away from the prospect of living close to other people. His natural sociability was destroyed. Only now has he felt again the warmth of human kindness – the very thing that Jesus gave to Zacchaeus.

Brian Fahy describes himself as an "apprentice poet". His website is to be found at www.erpispoetry.com.

Lord God, it's not easy to come to terms with the death of a loved one. There's an aching hole in our hearts that only they can fill. Comfort all those who are sad because someone they love has died. 🕊 Amen.

The house that's a home

By Mary Bell

Having recently moved house twice, I have an acute awareness of the difference between a house and a home. When the removal lorry has departed and all that is left are empty rooms, there is a sadness, a lack of warmth; the life of the place has gone.

Homes come in all sizes and conditions but that doesn't matter a bit when the door opens to a warm and friendly

welcome. In India we visited some very flimsy structures in rural villages where we were greeted as honoured guests, seated on the best charpoy (light bedstead) and given all they had – a drink of water. If a guest visits your home, it bestows a blessing on the host.

This is why we find the story of Zacchaeus so appealing. We hope that Jesus would choose to visit our homes too, no matter who we are. We would open the door wide and welcome him warmly.

Following many years in the classroom, retired teacher and school Principal, Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauties of the natural world around her.

Feasts of the week
Tuesday 1 November

All Saints

Wednesday 2 November

All Souls

Today, before evening falls, each one of us can think of the twilight of life: "What will my passing away be like?" All of us will experience sundown, all of us! Do we look at it with hope? Do we look with that joy at being welcomed by the Lord?

Today is a day of joy; however, it is serene and tranquil joy, a peaceful joy. Let us think about the passing away of so many of our brothers and sisters who have preceded us, let us think about the evening of our life, when it will come. And let us think about our hearts and ask ourselves: "Where is my heart anchored?" If it is not firmly anchored, let us anchor it beyond, on that shore, knowing that hope does not disappoint because the Lord Jesus does not disappoint.

Pope Francis

The saints of all times... are not simply symbols, distant, unreachable human beings. On the contrary, they are people who lived with their feet on the ground; they experienced the daily toil of existence with its successes and failures, finding in the Lord the strength to rise again and again, and to continue on their journey.

Pope Francis

Today:
Wisdom 11:22 – 12:2
2 Thessalonians 1:11 – 2:2
Luke 19:1-10

Monday:
Philippians 2:1-4
Luke 14:12-14

Tuesday:
Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12

Wednesday:
Isaiah 25:6-9
Romans 5:5-11
Luke 7:11-17

Thursday:
Philippians 3:3-8
Luke 15:1-10

Friday:
Philippians 3:17 – 4:1
Luke 16:1-8

Saturday:
Philippians 4:10-19
Luke 16:9-15

Next Sunday:
2 Maccabees 7:1-2, 9-14
2 Thessalonians 2:16 – 3:5
Luke 20:27-38