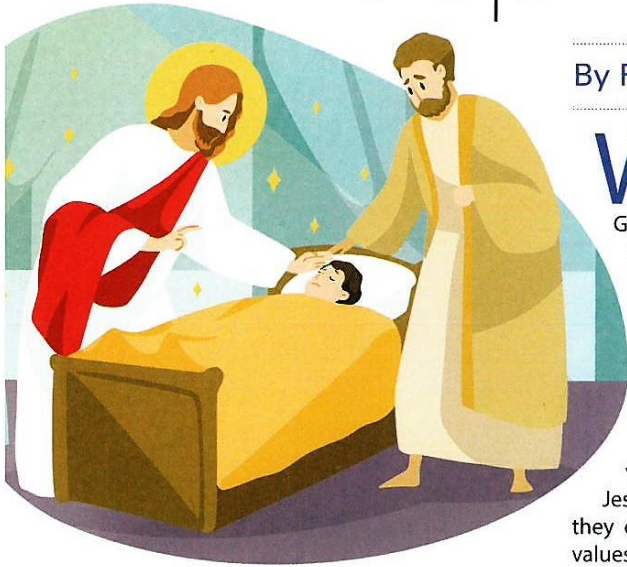


SUNDAY PLUS

Welcome!

Hospitality's reward!




By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

When Jesus is welcomed into towns and villages by people who see him as a holy messenger from God, the people receive a holy man's reward: the poor hear Good News, the sick are healed, sinners come to know the forgiveness of God. The people receive their own reward for the hospitality of a faith that welcomes Jesus. Their hospitality is not a matter of bed and breakfast and goodbye; it is the act of opening their heart to the visit of God who comes in the person of Jesus. Jesus' presence rubs off on them: they catch something of his goodness and values; they are changed because of his visit. The ultimate support that Jesus looks for is our openness to the Gospel. His promise

stands good for all who listen to his word today. Jesus doesn't want us to give an offering to his messengers in the hope that they will go away and leave us in peace. Supporting your local prophets means first listening to what they say. But it also means taking practical responsibility for supporting them in their ministry. One of the characteristics of the Church is the generosity of the people towards their ministers and so many pastoral projects. Jesus says that responding to all this has its own reward. People won't lose by their generosity to the cause of the Gospel. As Jesus says: "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me." In the end, it is God who is our guest.

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

Lord, it's not always easy to be welcoming to other people. Sometimes it's inconvenient. Teach me to see them with your eyes and love them with your heart.  Amen.

A cup of water

By Sr Mary Burke FMDM

Jesus knows what it is like to receive "so much" as a cup of cold water. In the often-parched land of Israel, a cup of cold water could mean the difference between life and death. Water was often scarce and always welcome.

Giving a cup of water is an act of reaching out, of welcome and of acknowledging the other. Often the smallest act of welcome

changes the dynamic of our encounters. Significant for us also as followers of Christ is the statement "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me".

So, when we welcome another into our homes, our hearts and our lives, it is indeed Christ himself who comes among us. We might surmise that in failing to welcome those who come to us, even by not giving them the smallest thing such as a cup of cold water, we are in danger of neglecting to offer hospitality to Christ himself!

Sr Mary Burke is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Jesus is the home of hospitality. And how much good we can do, if only we try to speak this language of hospitality, this language of receiving and welcoming. How much pain can be soothed, how much despair can be allayed in a place where we feel at home! This requires open doors, especially the doors of our heart.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week

Thursday 6 July

St Maria Goretti

(1890-1902)

Nettuno, a town on the coast of Lazio, Italy, is marked by more than a thousand graves from WWII – and the tomb of a twelve-year-old girl, Maria Goretti. Maria was stabbed when she repeatedly resisted the sexual advances of a young man, Alessandro Serenelli, and died a few hours later. Before her death, Maria received the sacraments and, whilst worried about her widowed mother and five siblings, also forgave her murderer. Serenelli served twenty-seven years in prison and spent the rest of his life trying to make up for his actions. In fact, on his release, he made his way to Maria's home and begged forgiveness from her mother.

Serenelli later became a Franciscan lay brother and died in 1970. He was with Maria's mother for Maria's canonisation on 24 June 1950. He became known for always referring to Maria as "my little saint".

Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Today:
2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16
Romans 6:3-4, 8-11
Matthew 10:37-42

Monday:
Ephesians 2:19-22
John 20:24-29

Tuesday:
Genesis 19:15-29
Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday:
Genesis 21:5, 8-20
Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday:
Genesis 22:1-19
Matthew 9:1-8

Friday:
Genesis 23:1-4, 19;
24:1-8, 62-67
Matthew 9:9-13

Saturday:
Genesis 27:1-5, 15-29
Matthew 9:14-17

Next Sunday:
Zechariah 9:9-10
Romans 8:9, 11-13
Matthew 11:25-30