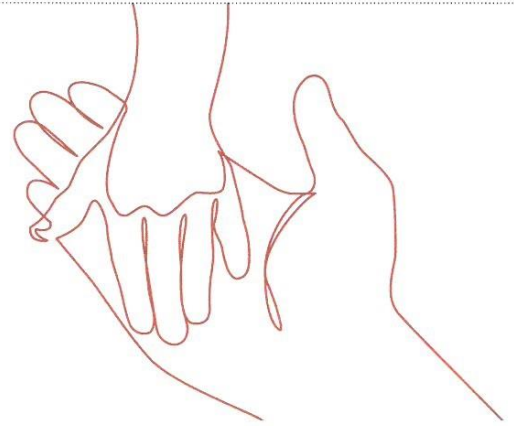


SUNDAY PLUS

Leadership through service

Leadership through trust



By Michael George

A classroom management principle is never to promise what you cannot deliver. Do not promise a reward that is exaggerated or that in practice you cannot give. Do not talk about imposing a sanction, unless with one hundred per cent certainty you intend to follow through with it if the circumstances continue to warrant it. If you say that you will do something, stick to your word and do it.

This principle is about transparency and trust and extends far beyond classroom walls. We can trust people who do what they say they are going to do.


In today's Gospel the landowner did what he said he would do. He paid each of the workers what he had promised. On their own, each worker would have been perfectly happy; only when they began comparing themselves with others did they feel unfairly treated.

The workers were paid to do a job for the landowner. In a sense, they served him for a day. Yet to a greater extent it was the workers

who were served by the landowner. He taught them a message applicable not for just one day, but for all time. He taught them about trust, that it is good to be generous and equal in love towards all, and to concern themselves firstly with their own relationship with him before worrying about others.

The landowner was, of course, teaching them and us about the love of God, whose promises and whose love we can always trust and rely upon.

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

Help me to remember, Lord, that there's nothing that's going to happen to me today that you and I can't handle together.  Amen.

She served

By Natasha Pritchard

I once knew a lady who had nine siblings. When their mother became old and frail, the others were too busy and didn't want to help, leaving their sister to care for her full-time. For years, she worked tirelessly and thanklessly, day and night, caring for their mother. When their mother died, the lady received the same share of the inheritance as the children who had barely spoken to their mother in her final years.

The daughter had put herself last for so many years, sacrificing career and personal relationships. Yet she didn't become bitter and bore no ill will towards her siblings. God had given each of them the opportunity to serve and she was glad to have taken the lead.

Service is not easy and often not fair. Those who work serving others in our society often don't get the recognition they deserve. Where earthly rewards are lacking, we may trust that God sees all and have hope of a heavenly reward.

Natasha Pritchard has worked in Catholic hospital chaplaincy, youth ministry and is now Area Support Chaplain at Methodist Homes.

Service in great part means caring for vulnerability, for the vulnerable members of our families, our society, our people... Service always looks to their faces, touches their flesh, senses their closeness... Service is never ideological, for we do not serve ideas, we serve people.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Monday 25 September

Ss Louis Martin
(1823-1894) and
Zélie Guerin (1831-1877)

A jeweller and watchmaker, Louis Martin, and a lacemaker, Azélie-Marie Guérin Martin (Zélie) were the first married couple to be canonised. As Pope Francis said at their canonisation, they "practised Christian service in the family, creating day by day an environment of faith and love which nurtured the vocations of their daughters, among whom was St Thérèse of the Child Jesus."

Louis and Zélie had nine children altogether, although only five daughters lived to adulthood. Of these, four became Carmelite nuns and the fifth, Marie Léonie, a Visitandine.

"In life, Louis and Zélie knew great joy and excruciating sorrow. They firmly believed that God was with them throughout every challenge that married life, parenting, and their occupations presented."

Today:
Isaiah 55:6-9
Philippians 1:20-24. 27
Matthew 20:1-16

Monday:
Ezra 1:1-6
Luke 8:16-18

Tuesday:
Ezra 6:7-8, 12. 14-20
Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday:
Ezra 9:5-9
Luke 9:1-6

Thursday:
Haggai 1:1-8
Luke 9:7-9

Friday:
Daniel 7:9-10. 13-14 or
Apocalypse 12:7-12
John 1:47-51

Saturday:
Zechariah 2:5-9. 14-15
Luke 9:43-45

Next Sunday:
Ezekiel 18:25-28
Philippians 2:1-11
Matthew 21:28-32