

SUNDAY PLUS

More than many sparrows

Fear versus worth

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel Jesus argues that the Father cares deeply for the true disciple. He takes the example of a sparrow, which was regarded as almost worthless. Sparrows were sold in the marketplace as food for poor people – two for a penny and five for two pennies. The fifth was thrown in for nothing. "Yet," Jesus says, "not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing... So, there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows." Jesus' point is very important: do not be afraid: "you are worth..." According to Jesus your own sense of worth is strong enough to overcome your sense of fear.

If you believe deep down that you are worthless, there is no point in defending

anything. Anyone can intimidate a sparrow; anyone can intimidate those who regard themselves as worthless. But if you believe that who you are and what you stand for add up to some worth, then you will be willing to take on those who would rubbish you and your values. That is Jesus' point. Your real worth before God is a more powerful force than your real fear of your persecutors. That sense of worth can outdistance the hate of all your oppressors. That is why Jeremiah and Jesus and all the Christian martyrs can face their persecutors with awesome courage: they all know that their true worth can never be killed. God's everlasting love is the only real offer they can't refuse.

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



Lord of love, expand my heart. Let me see beyond myself and my needs. Show me how to love without counting the cost to myself and my own convenience. Amen.

Through God's eyes

Sr Mary Burke FMDM

As followers of Christ there is no need for us to fear what the future may hold. As we live through times of difficulty personally and globally, Jesus tells us we are precious and each one of us is worth more than "hundreds of sparrows". In addition, God our Father cares for us immensely and has counted every hair on our heads.

As an offering made by the poor in the Temple, sparrows were indeed "two for a penny" and among the most common and unremarkable of birds. Sparrows are easily overlooked in favour of the more tuneful singers or beautifully robed inhabitants of the bird world. Yet, today's word of God reminds us that, in the eyes of God our Father, not one single person is forgotten and each one of us is unique, beautiful and precious. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could see one another through God's eyes!

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

Do I let the Lord who gives himself to me, guide me to going out ever more from my little enclosure, in order to give, to share, to love him and others?

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Tuesday 27 June

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Probably the world's best-known icon of Our Lady, the original picture is enshrined in St Alphonsus' church in Rome. Since 1886, when Pope Pius IX ordered the newly discovered image to be replaced as near as possible to its original location, the church of St Matthew, destroyed by French troops in 1878, the Redemptorists have obeyed the Pope's wish: "Make her known everywhere!"

In shrines across the world, Our Lady is honoured under her title of Perpetual Help. Often, weekly prayer services are held where people's petitions and thanks are read out and prayers are offered, asking for Mary's help in life's daily challenges. These novena prayers echo the nine days which the disciples and Our Lady spent in prayer after the Ascension and before Pentecost. The devotions continue throughout the year so that people can join the Perpetual Novena at any time.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us.

Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Today:
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Romans 5:12-15
Matthew 10:26-33

Monday:
Genesis 12:1-9
Matthew 7:1-5

Tuesday:
Genesis 13:2, 5-18
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

Wednesday:
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Matthew 7:15-20

Thursday:
Acts 12:1-11
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18
Matthew 16:13-19

Friday:
Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22
Matthew 8:1-4

Saturday:
Genesis 18:1-15
Matthew 8:5-17

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