

# SUNDAY PLUS

## True priorities

# Food banks

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

According to recent estimates, there are over 1,400 Trussell Trust food banks and at least 1,172 independent food banks in the UK. The Trussell Trust is the largest network of food banks in the UK and it distributed close to three million emergency food parcels in the past year. It might seem strange that a first-world country must provide so many food banks. The Redemptorist parish

in Clapham, London, runs the Ace of Clubs for homeless people: last year they provided over 34,000 meals, welcomed over 1000 people through the doors and helped over 100 people off the streets and into accommodation. Now, they are helping between 100 and 180 people per day.

All this work is necessary and highly appreciated. In today's Gospel, however, you have Jesus resenting the fact that he is being treated by the crowds as a mobile food bank. Jesus tells the crowds that they are looking for him because they had all the bread they wanted to eat. They are hungry again; they want more. Jesus is frankly disappointed that the people do not move from accepting the bread to wondering about the identity of the bread-giver.

What matters is not what Jesus can do, but who he really is.

Jesus has not come simply to satisfy the physical hunger of the crowds by multiplying bread; he has come to offer himself as the bread that will end hunger forever. Thus, Jesus identifies himself: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never be hungry".

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk).



In addition to physical hunger man carries within him another hunger — all of us have this hunger — a more important hunger, which cannot be satisfied with ordinary food. It is a hunger for life, a hunger for eternity which he alone can satisfy, as he is "the bread of life".

Pope Francis

## Hungry for love

By Natasha Pritchard

If I were to put a number on it, I'd say that my cat thinks about food ninety per cent of the time. He's forever circling my feet when I'm in the kitchen, trying to get close when I'm eating or waking me up hours before my alarm goes off. If I'm honest, my percentage isn't that far behind the cat's: I'm always thinking about food!

When we feed ourselves physically, within a short time we start thinking about where our

next meal is coming from. The Israelites wandering the desert were no different. Their hunger made them grow restless and uncertain, but God gave them what they needed to satisfy their physical needs.

Spiritual nourishment gives us something more meaningful, longer lasting and ultimately more satisfying. When God sent Jesus into the world, it was to satisfy the world's spiritual hunger. Jesus is the bread of life who feeds our souls.

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

Feast of the week  
Tuesday 6 August

## The Transfiguration of the Lord

Living a spiritual life requires a change of heart, a conversion. Such a conversion may be marked by a sudden inner change, or it can take place through a long, quiet process of transformation. But it always involves an inner experience of oneness. We realise that we are in the centre, and that from there all that is and all that takes place can be seen and understood as part of the mystery of God's life with us. Our conflicts and pains, our tasks and promises,

our families and friends, our activities and projects, no longer appear to us a fatiguing variety of things that we can barely keep together, but rather as affirmations and revelations of the new life of the Spirit in us. "All these other things," which so occupied and preoccupied us, now come as gifts or challenges that strengthen and deepen the new life that we have discovered.

Henri Nouwen

Lord Jesus, I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched my heart and I can never be the same. I love you. Let me love you more and more. ✚ Amen.

Today:  
Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15  
Ephesians 4:17, 20-24  
John 6:24-35

Monday:  
Jeremiah 28:1-17  
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday:  
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14  
2 Peter 1:16-19  
Mark 9:2-10

Wednesday:  
Jeremiah 31:1-7  
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday:  
Jeremiah 31:31-34  
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday:  
Hosea 2:16-17, 21-22  
Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday:  
2 Corinthians 9:6-10  
John 12:24-26

Next Sunday:  
1 Kings 19:4-8  
Ephesians 4:30-5:2  
John 6:41-51