

SUNDAY PLUS

All through Jesus

God's work of art



By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Some people imagine God as someone who waits outside the door in the dark in order to humiliate us with the light of truth. The purpose of the light is to enlighten, not to blind. God wants to see us in the light. After all, as the second reading tells us: "We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it."

Most of us would have difficulty in imagining ourselves as God's work of art: it takes less effort to see ourselves as God's mistake – a piece of promise that, on close scrutiny, turns out to be nothing more than a fake. It is Gospel that we were created in God's love, that

we are God's work of art. We must begin imagining ourselves as God sees us.

Works of art should not be left to rot away in the dark, neglected and unseen. If they have been abandoned for a long time, they will need sensitive restoration to be saved and brought to life again. Lent gives us the opportunity to think again about the task of restoration and allow God to bring out the best in us. Like all restorers, God needs light to work. We should trust God's good intentions and come out where we can be seen. Who knows, we might even begin to value God's work ourselves? And if that happened, we might see more of God's art in other people.

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

Jesus, Lord, help me to open the door of my heart to you.
Stay with me and in me, forever and always.  Amen.

Judge not

By Krista Nelson

If Jesus came "not to judge", why do we act so contrary to this? We are quick to say, "don't judge a book by its cover", but how often do we do exactly that to people? Too often we see ourselves as judge and jury on what is correct, whether publicly on social media or privately.

What if we turned our tendency to judge into a force for good? If, instead of

judging whether someone was acting or dressing as we thought they should, we were just as quick to judge when someone was in need?

What if we all became quick to judge when someone needed a friendly smile, a kind conversation or a helping hand? We could then love, not judge, our neighbour as we should.

God gave us a fantastic brain for making judgements – let's try to make those judgements as he would want us to.

Krista Nelson is a mum of four, catechist and editor.

In our day we pass in front of so many doors that invite us to come in, promising a happiness which later we realise lasts only an instant, exhausts itself with no future. But I ask you: by which door do we want to enter? And who do we want to let in through the door of our life?

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Tuesday 12 March

St Nicholas Owen SJ

(c. 1562-1606)

St Nicholas Owen was a Jesuit brother whose talents as a mason and carpenter provided priests with concealed hiding places in the homes of Catholics, and enabled the priests to avoid capture, despite the most thorough of searches. The son of a carpenter and the brother of two priests, Owen employed great ingenuity in devising the priest-holes, and even hid his activities by working openly during the day as a regular carpenter and working on the hiding places only at night. The house servants would be ignorant of his real activity and only he and the owner of the home would know where he had created a hiding place by chipping through stone walls or burrowing into the earth. Some of the places were big enough to accommodate six to ten people; others were concealed inside another hidden room to throw the priest-hunters off the scent. It was hard work to do by oneself and he suffered injuries in the process.

Tom Rochford SJ

Today:
2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
Ephesians 2:4-10
John 3:14-21

Monday:
Isaiah 65:17-21
John 4:43-54

Tuesday:
Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12
John 5:1-3, 5-16

Wednesday:
Isaiah 49:8-15
John 5:17-30

Thursday:
Exodus 32:7-14
John 5:31-47

Friday:
Wisdom 2:1, 12-22
John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

Saturday:
Jeremiah 11:18-20
John 7:40-52

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Hebrews 5:7-9
John 12:20-33