

# SUNDAY PLUS

Open or closed?

## Bread from heaven

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

With Jesus' dream to share himself as food for others is no vanity of the night: he acts his dream with open eyes; he makes it possible on the cross in the total giving of self. It's helpful to remember that for Jesus, the word "body" meant more than it means to us – it meant the entire person. Also, in Jesus' day, blood was regarded as the principle of life – when a person lay wounded and bleeding, the loss of blood meant the person often died. When Jesus says, "This is my body, my blood, given for you", what he is saying is, "This is the totality of my being, all that I am, all that I hope to be." This is

a great summary of Jesus' message: a self-giving love that is offered without holding anything back. This is offered as the food of life: "I am the living bread which has come down from heaven".

In the sacrament of the Eucharist, we draw life from the body and blood of Jesus. "Do this in memory of me." The act that we do in our gathering is the deed of memory: we not only recall Jesus, but we also consume his memory as the food of life. We are nourished by real food and real drink: in eating and drinking we have new life in him. We eat the Wisdom of God; it becomes part of our very being. It becomes our resource for leaving folly and living a life of wisdom.

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



If your heart is always closed, faith doesn't enter! Instead, God the Father draws us to Jesus: it is we who open or close our hearts.

Pope Francis

## Familiar faces

By Krista Nelson

Blessed Carlos Acutis is reported to have said, "All people are born as originals, but many die as photocopies." Pretty wise words for a teenager!

We often try to conform not just ourselves but also others to certain expectations. And we project our own self-image onto others.

There are countless stories of saints who faced disbelief and disapproval from those who couldn't accept their calling to step out of the norm. You

can imagine their friends thinking, "How could they be that different from me? What makes them think they are special?" – a kind of "Who do you think you are?" attitude as we hear in today's Gospel.

We mistake "special" for "original" – for the unique being God made them to be – because perhaps we have forgotten too that we ourselves are unique. We are not meant to be a photocopy – and nor should we expect that of others.

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

Feast of the week  
Thursday 15 August

## The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Let us consider what a moment the Assumption must have been for Mary! In describing this scene, some Church Fathers spoke of Jesus himself coming back to earth to take his mother and bring her to her heavenly home. More recently, John Paul II said that the Assumption truly was an event of love, in which Mary's ardent longing to be with her son was finally fulfilled.

In fact, many paintings of the Assumption portray Mary rising in splendour on a cloud to heaven, received by the angels with trumpets and celebration, and reunited joyfully with her beloved son.

[The Assumption] is the hope that God will carry us through our distress and lift up our heavy hearts... With whatever we're facing in life, may we, like Mary, fall into the Father's arms, so that we may have a more profound experience of his supporting us in our present sufferings and raising us to himself – both now and at the hour of our death.

Edward Sri

Open my heart, Lord. I want to love Jesus. Amen. 

Today:  
1 Kings 19:4-8  
Ephesians 4:30 – 5:2  
John 6:41-51

Monday:  
Ezekiel 1:2-5, 24-28  
Matthew 17:22-27

Tuesday:  
Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:4  
Matthew 18:1-5,  
10, 12-14

Wednesday:  
Ezekiel 9:1-7; 10:18-22  
Matthew 18:15-20

Thursday:  
Apocalypse 11:19;  
12:1-6, 10  
1 Corinthians 15:20-26  
Luke 1:39-56

Friday:  
Ezekiel 16:1-15, 60, 63  
Matthew 19:3-12

Saturday:  
Ezekiel 18:1-10, 13,  
30-32  
Matthew 19:13-15

Next Sunday:  
Proverbs 9:1-6  
Ephesians 5:15-20  
John 6:51-58