

SUNDAY PLUS

United in witness

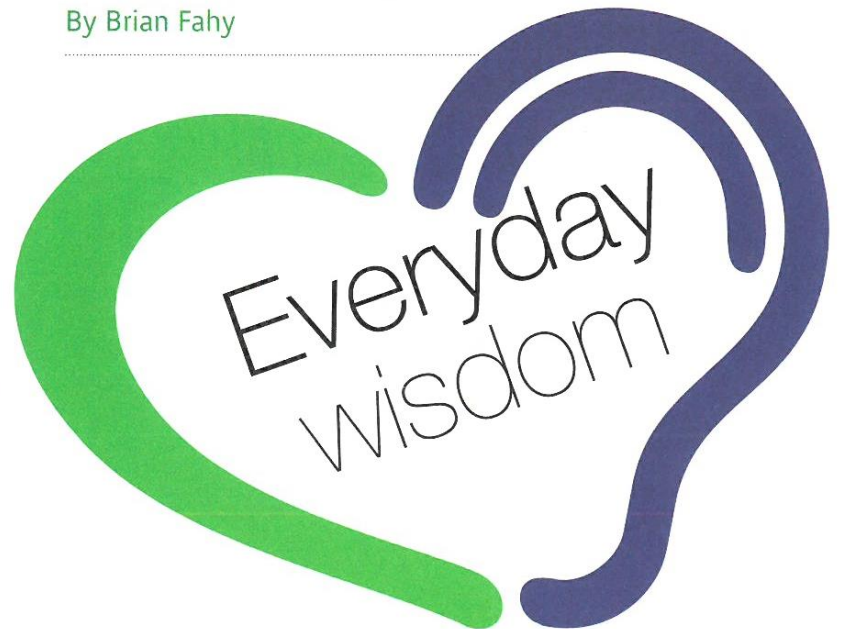
Martin came from County Clare. He worked in London all his life and drove heavy lorries. An easy-going character, he was something of a philosopher and friendly with a local young priest. One day the priest got quite agitated because someone was forever coming to him with moans and complaints, tormenting the life out of him. When Martin heard of it, he said to the priest, "Don't mind that feller. He needs to go and have a good talk with himself." This classic piece of wisdom highlights people who are forever distracted by all around them and who never stop to consider things in their own heart.


The story of Samuel today tells of a boy who learns how to listen to the spirit within him. Wisdom and God's guidance will come to him because he is attentive to his own heart. That same wisdom has come to us in human form in the person of the Lord. "Where do you live?" ask two disciples. "Come and see", Jesus says. They spend the day with the Lord and are changed men as a result. In these two stories we find the sources of wisdom for ourselves – consideration in the heart and reading and listening to the Word of God.

In a famous quotation the psychiatrist Carl Jung tells us that, "The one who looks outside, dreams. The one who looks inside, awakens." We all need to listen to the Lord, and to have a good talk with ourselves.

Brian Fahy, a loyal writer for Redemptorist Publications, wrote this for us a couple of weeks before he died. May he rest in peace.

By Brian Fahy



Lord Jesus, who prayed that we might all be one,
we pray to you for the unity of Christians,
according to your will,
according to your means.
May your Spirit enable us
to experience the suffering caused by division,
to see our sin
and to hope beyond all hope.  Amen.

Written by the
Chemin Neuf Community

This is Jesus' way, as well as the manner of Christ's disciples' missionary work: to proclaim the Gospel with gentleness, but also firmness, without shouting, without reprimanding anyone, but gently and firmly, without arrogance or imposition.

Pope Francis

A different witness

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

When founded in Jerusalem in 1119 to protect Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, the Knights Templar couldn't foresee that their English home would, for centuries, testify to a gross miscarriage of justice. Although disbanded in 1312, their Lamb of God symbol still appears throughout Temple in London, now home of two of the four Inns of Court.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, died at the hands of an unjust ruler – and so did the warrior monks, represented by an image of two knights riding the one horse, also become

victims of injustice and greed.

Today, lawyers fight for justice where London's Templars once lived and prayed. In France in 1308, cash-strapped Philip IV had many Templars arrested, tortured into false confessions of heresy, and burned at the stake before taking their property and money. The Church later declared Philip's persecution unjust – but it was too late to bring the dead back to life.

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Feast of the week
18-25 January



Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe". Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January, between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate it, for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for unity.

In order to prepare for the annual celebration, ecumenical partners in a particular region are invited to produce a basic liturgical text on a biblical theme. Then an international editorial team of WCC and Catholic representatives refines this text to ensure that it can be prayed throughout the world.

World Council of Churches

Today: 1 Samuel 3:3-10, 19 1 Corinthians 6:13-15, 17-20 John 1:35-42
Monday: 1 Samuel 15:16-23 Mark 2:18-22
Tuesday: 1 Samuel 16:1-13 Mark 2:23-28
Wednesday: 1 Samuel 17:32-33, 37, 40-51 Mark 3:1-6
Thursday: 1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7 Mark 3:7-12
Friday: 1 Samuel 24:3-21 Mark 3:13-19
Saturday: 2 Samuel 1:1-4, 11-12, 17, 19, 23-27 Mark 3:20-21
Next Sunday: Jonah 3:1-5, 10 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 Mark 1:14-20