

SUNDAY PLUS

The seed of hope

Leaving well alone

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Giving us some insight into the kingdom of God, Jesus speaks of the seed that grows by itself. After the farmer scatters the seed, its dynamic connection with the earth makes its own story. The farmer's effort is not needed for the process of growth itself; neither does he need to know how the growth happens. His own cycle of sleeping and rising is irrelevant to what is happening between the seed and the soil. That irresistible growth is independent of human effort, for the earth produces of itself. The farmer's intervention is needed only when the process is complete when he gathers the fruit of the earth's labour. What the earth produces is given back to him as gift.

The kingdom of God grows in its own mysterious way, not because we can force it by our own intervention or effort. Saint Paul's teaching makes the best commentary: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters



is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). The parable assures us that God's purposes are being worked out in the endless round of ordinary time. To trust in God's providence, knowing that we do not understand his mysterious ways, is to live a profoundly carefree life. It is to allow God to be God, as the farmer allows the earth to be its own mysterious agent of growth.

Sometimes the most constructive thing we can do is to leave well alone.

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

Small and beautiful

By Natasha Pritchard

Most of us have a story about a person doing something seemingly small, but which touched our lives considerably. Today's readings show us that a little can go a long way: God plants a sprig of cedar, the farmer plants a mustard seed, and out of these grow enough food and shelter for a multitude of creation.

When he was dying, all my Grandad wanted was some Dundee cake. My Mum mentioned this online and a couple of days later a cake arrived unexpectedly from my friend who was living in Dundee at the time. One simple act of kindness from her is still remembered regularly by my family nearly ten years later.

We also have the power to sow tiny seeds of hope or joy in the lives of others. We are all capable of small acts and a smile, a chat, an offer of assistance, the promise of prayer or an unexpected gift can really go a long way.

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

Faith is not alienation or a crooked deal, but a path of beauty and truth marked out by Jesus to prepare our eyes to gaze without glasses at "the marvellous face of God".

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Saturday 22 June

Ss John Fisher and Thomas More

Prayer for Good Humour

Grant me oh Lord, good digestion, and also something to digest.

Grant me a healthy body, and the necessary good humour to maintain it.

Grant me a simple soul that knows to treasure all that is good and that doesn't frighten easily at the sight of evil, but rather finds the means to put things back in their place.

Give me a soul that knows not boredom, grumbles, sighs, and laments, nor excess of stress, because of that obstructing thing called "I."

Grant me O Lord, a good sense of humour. Allow me the grace to be able to take a joke, to discover in life a bit of joy, and to be able to share it with others.

St Thomas More

Lord of life, plant your love in my heart and let it grow in beauty and fruitfulness.  Amen.

Today:
Ezekiel 17:22-24
2 Corinthians 5:6-10
Mark 4:26-34

Monday:
1 Kings 21:1-16
Matthew 5:38-42

Tuesday:
1 Kings 21:17-29
Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday:
2 Kings 2:1, 6-14
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday:
Ecclesiasticus 48:1-14
Matthew 6:7-15

Friday:
2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20
Matthew 6:19-23

Saturday:
2 Chronicles 24:17-25
Matthew 6:24-34

Saturday:
England
2 Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31
Matthew 24:4-13

Next Sunday:
Job 38:1, 8-11
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
Mark 4:35-41