

# SUNDAY PLUS

## What matters

# The gift of a smile

By Natalie Claveria

Raising people up, be that through compliments or kind gestures, is such a simple act of kindness that goes such a long way. We always remember random acts of kindness that “made our day”. Sometimes, it is very easy to get bogged down in the mundane. Sometimes, we can all admit, it is easier to moan and groan than be positive, happy, upbeat and engaging. But happiness is quite contagious. The fact that the mere act of smiling stimulates the production of endorphins proves this! Plus, just being with someone who smiles makes us happier. Smiling also brings many health benefits, such as lowering anxiety, blood pressure and heart rate. Just as Jesus, with his Bread of Heaven, raises us up, as Christians let it be our business also to raise up others.

*A busy mum and active in her parish, Natalie Claveria is also the Head of Sales, Distribution & Customer Experience for Redemptorist Publications.*




## A different hunger

By Neil Foley

I once read a trivial internet quote that said, “Who knew that the hardest part of being an adult is figuring out what to cook for dinner every single night for the rest of your life? This quote struck a chord with me as I must admit that I am not a “foodie” and I dislike the daily grind of having to buy and prepare meals. I am grateful for the food that sustains me, but I sometimes dream of an existence where I didn’t get hungry and could get on with what seem to be the more important things of life. Well, spiritually this is what Jesus is offering us, the bread of life that means we will never be hungry again. The living bread that is more than physical food, rather it is eternal sustenance that nourishes our bodies, minds and spirits to everlasting life with him who provides it.

*Neil Foley is a lay missionary with the Redemptorists in Ireland. He lives in Wexford with his wife, Helen, and twin girls Zélie and Martha, where he also works fulltime as an environmental scientist.*

Lord, my God, help me to get my priorities right. If you are the centre of my life, then everything else follows. Fill my heart with your love.  Amen.

Feast of the week  
Sunday 18 August

## St Helena (d. 330)

Was Saint Ambrose accurate or insulting when he described Saint Helena as “a good stable-maid”? He was born approximately nine years after she died in AD 330 and so they never actually met. However, although apparently born into a poor, lower-class family, Helena eventually became the mother of the first Christian emperor, Constantine. She also spent a vast amount of time, energy – and money – visiting the holy places associated with Jesus, where she built shrines and churches. Where possible, she converted

pagan shrines to Christian usage, paying for the makeover from her own pocket and, with her son’s approval, that of Rome’s state treasury. For this, she is regarded as the patron saint of architects.

Helena was renowned for her care of poor people and communities, seeking them out to offer her support. A true missionary, it was partly through her influence and work that Christianity spread throughout the known world of her time.

Some nourish themselves with money, others with success and vanity, others with power and pride. But the food that truly nourishes and satiates us is only that which the Lord gives us!

Pope Francis

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

Monday:  
Ezekiel 24:15-24  
Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday:  
Ezekiel 28:1-10  
Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday:  
Ezekiel 34:1-11  
Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday:  
Ezekiel 36:23-28  
Matthew 22:1-14

Friday:  
Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday:  
Apocalypse 21:9-14  
John 1:45-51

Next Sunday:  
Joshua 24:1-2. 15-18  
Ephesians 5:21-32  
John 6:60-69