

SUNDAY PLUS

Stay!

Live to the full

By Sr Penny Roker RSM

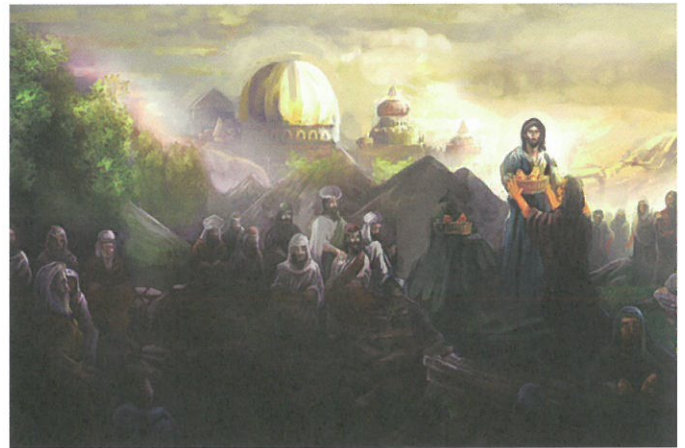
Holiday time can be challenging for parents trying to keep children fed and entertained. Youngsters do not always appreciate the limits of a family budget. Jesus would sympathise. He knew how it felt to be treated like a vending machine! After the feeding of the five thousand, Galileans looked to him as a supplier of free food!

True friends love you for yourself. They are part of you and you of them. It was to this ideal of oneness that Jesus invited his followers. He showed what love could be: a mutual self-giving like the relationship he enjoyed with his heavenly Father. Jesus was doing more than fill people's bellies. He was filling their spiritual emptiness with his own divine life. I am living bread, he said, in that simple way he had of conveying the profoundest of truths.

But this deeper level of engagement was not to everyone's liking. "Do you also wish to go away?" Jesus asks us, as he asked the Twelve. There comes a threshold in every relationship where either we shrink from commitment or stay for the long haul. Jesus can be more than a dispenser of answers to prayer in moments of crisis. He longs to infuse human

lives with himself. To receive the holy sacrament of Christ's body and blood is to be at one with creation, to engage with its needs, delight in its diversity and share its heartache, too. Such is the cost of living – living, that is, to the full.

Sr Penny Roker RSM is a Sister of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy



We need Jesus, to be with him, to be nourished at his table, on his words of eternal life!

Pope Francis

Don't go!

By Neil Foley

I remember as a child my cousins would come to stay with us for the summer. They lived on the other side of the country, so we generally only got to see them once a year. Living in rural Ireland, we would have great fun outdoors during the long days of summer and, despite the Irish climate, those days always seemed to be sunny and bright. But inevitably the summer would come to an end, and they would have to return home and we would have to return to school. How we longed for our friends and summer days to stay. Jesus' closest followers longed to stay with him and to continue to hear his words of eternal life. They wanted to remain with him forever. I believe that those golden summer days of childhood, where time stood still, were a faint glimpse of eternity with the Lord.

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.

Feast of the week
Friday 29 August


The Passion of St John the Baptist

Tragically, it's a true story. The marriages, intermarriages, divorces, killings and family relationships between her grandfather, parents and Salome confused even the people of their times. Salome herself followed the family tradition of complexity, it would seem, and eventually married her uncle and then, when he died, her cousin. No wonder John the Baptist denounced their behaviour!

We know the story: Salome danced for her father and his guests, giving so much pleasure

that Herod promised rewards that he would later regret. Her mother Herodias instructed her to ask for the head of Saint John the Baptist. What use to a young woman was a man's head?

According to the Gospel, Herod didn't want to kill John but also didn't want to look bad before his guests. Did Herodias and Salome ever feel guilty or show any remorse? John died because of three people's blatant disregard for the lives of others. He died because of their utter selfishness.

I need you, Lord. Please never allow me to wander away from you.  Amen.

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

Monday:
2 Thessalonians
1:1-5. 11-12
Matthew 23:13-22

Tuesday:
2 Thessalonians
2:1-3. 14-17
Matthew 23:23-26

Wednesday:
2 Thessalonians
3:6-10. 16-18
Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday:
Jeremiah 1:17-19
Mark 6:17-29

Friday:
1 Corinthians 1:17-25
Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday:
1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Matthew 25:14-30

Next Sunday:
Deuteronomy 4:1-2. 6-8
James 1:17-18. 21-22. 27
Mark 7:1-8. 14-15. 21-23