

SUNDAY PLUS

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It is
hard
to be
good!

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Loving Lord, be close to those in prison and to their families for whom life can become extremely painful. Watch over and support all those who are imprisoned within their own hearts and life situations, that they will find the freedom for which they long.  Amen.

Jesus needs YOU!

by "a prison visitor"

Three-quarters of prison inmates cannot read, write or count to the standard expected of an 11-year-old. They depend on someone else to write letters on their behalf or to read out the messages from their families and friends.

The reoffending rate drops by 80 per cent if the person leaves prison and goes straight into a job. How many return to crime because illiteracy limits their employment possibilities, so that, once again amongst the "bored-on-benefits", there's little hope of a hopeful, challenging future?

Catholic education has a wonderful tradition of

helping children to reach for the stars even if the star for which they are reaching is as simple as being able to recite the alphabet or count to ten. Teachers in Catholic schools have made a name for themselves because of their preparedness to go the extra mile on behalf of their pupils.

Some people are illiterate because their families had never learned to read and write, but how many only needed a Good Samaritan?

Fact really can be stranger than fiction. As the burglar left the crime scene, he forgot to carry away his holdall containing a couple of letters bearing his name and address. Unsurprisingly, he soon found himself with a court appearance and jail sentence.

Another strange but true story involved a man who stole a wooden bench from outside a pub. Finding it too heavy to carry, he dragged the seat home – and the police officer merely followed the trail through the grass and down the muddy lane...

"Mr Big" often escapes paying the penalty of his crimes. It's the small fry who are caught out, often through their own blunders.

The rich young man in today's Gospel tried hard to live a virtuous life and wanted to do more than the bare minimum

required to reach heaven. Perhaps he hoped that Jesus would tell him to give a hefty donation to the poor people in the neighbourhood or to offer a bullock rather than a goat as a sin offering in the Temple sacrifice – but to give up everything. Did Jesus really mean that? Surely not!

It is hard to be anonymously good! Too often, we want to do the right thing but also want other people to know just how hard we are trying. The small donations receive less publicity than the philanthropic millions which can bring about real changes in society – but Jesus praised the elderly widow who, in her poverty, gave more than she could afford. He pitied the rich young man who kept hold of his fortune.

Where do I stand?

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

Feast of the week
Friday 15 October

St Teresa of Avila

(1515-1582)

"We had to run many dangers. At no part of the road were the risks greater than within a few leagues of Burgos, at a place called Los Pontes. The rivers were so high that the water in places covered everything, neither road nor the smallest footpath could be seen: only water everywhere, and two abysses on each side. It seemed foolhardiness to advance, especially in a carriage, for if one strayed ever

so little off the road (then invisible), one must have perished."

Teresa led her frightened companions across the swollen river on foot. The current was so strong that she slipped, and was almost carried away. "Oh, my Lord!" she exclaimed, "When will you stop scattering obstacles in our path?" "Do not complain, daughter," the Divine Master answered, "for this is how I treat my friends." "Ah, Lord, it is also on that account that you have so few!" Teresa replied.

Adapted from The Life of Saint Teresa: taken from the French of A Carmelite Nun

"You cannot talk about paying a debt to society from a jail cell without windows. There is no humane punishment without a horizon. No one can change their life if they don't see a horizon. And so many times we are used to blocking the view of our inmates."

Pope Francis

Today:
Wisdom 7:7-11
Hebrews 4:12-13
Mark 10:17-30

Monday:
Romans 1:1-7
Luke 11:29-32

Tuesday:
Romans 1:16-25
Luke 11:37-41

Wednesday:
Romans 2:1-11
Luke 11:42-46

Thursday:
Romans 3:21-30
Luke 11:47-54

Friday:
Romans 4:1-8
Luke 12:1-7

Saturday:
Romans 4:13, 16-18
Luke 12:8-12

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 53:10-11
Hebrews 4:14-16
Mark 10:35-45