

SUNDAY PLUS

Look up!



By Fr Peter Morris C.Ss.R.

In amateur dramatics, a key thing I learned was how to make an entrance. A trick of the trade is to stride on, stop into a striking pose and look out across the top of the audience. You win the crowd's attention. To excel in theatre, knowing your physicality and appreciating what impact it makes goes a long way.

In the Gospel today, Jesus encourages us to stand up straight and hold our heads high, looking out for his coming. He encourages in his followers a readiness for that meeting when it happens. I find echoes of this teaching in Jesus' dramatic healing of the woman hunched over. Her visual experience once consisted of feet and dirt. Upon his touch, her world was a grander place because she could look up again.

We may have spent a good bit of time, especially in the last year or so, hunched over a computer. Our vision may have been quite limited by our isolation during the pandemic. We are invited to make an entrance into this new liturgical year. We begin by correcting our spiritual posture, broadening our vision, so that we may spot his coming into our lives, however that may be. In addition, we may gain the attention of others in need and embody the coming of Christ for them. This is not just performance or simple posturing. We stop peering at the dirt and look up and out for Our Lord making his own entrance into our lives.

Fr Peter Morris' book, *Christian Playfulness*, is available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Lord God, teach me to seek you, for I cannot seek you unless you teach me, or find you unless you show yourself to me. Let me seek you in my desire, Let me desire you in my seeking. Let me find you by loving you, Let me love you when I find you.  Amen.

St Anselm

Preparing for Christmas

Source Unknown

Here are a few suggestions for special gifts:

- a firm handshake to a shaky soul,
- a kind word to a lonely person,
- a warm smile to the disheartened,
- a sincere concern for someone troubled,
- a feeling of compassion for the neglected,
- a comforting thought for the bereaved,
- a respect for the dignity of others,
- a defence of the rights of individuals,
- a word of witness to help a seeking soul,
- a Merry Christmas to all.

Feast of the week Tuesday 30 November

St Andrew

Andrew, "the first to be an Apostle", is traditionally also credited with bringing Christianity to Scotland.

Tradition relates that, in 832, in what is now East Lothian, King Angus of the Picts prepared to fight a large Anglo-Saxon army. The night before the battle, he dreamed that he would see a cross and must fight in its name. When he awoke, in the deep blue early morning sky, Angus saw white clouds in the shape of the Saltire, the diagonal cross on which St Andrew is

said to have died. He ordered his men to carry the emblem into battle – and won. From that moment, Andrew and his Saltire cross became Scotland's national symbols.

As the years passed and especially during national emergencies, the Saltire has represented Andrew's protective concern for Scotland. Such famous historical characters as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce are recorded as depending on the apostle who introduced his brother Peter to Jesus.

St Andrew, watch over, bless and protect the people of Scotland.

"Jesus spoke to [Peter and Andrew] in terms of their own livelihood: 'You are fishermen, and you will become fishers of men'... The Lord does the same with us: he looks for us where we are, he loves us as we are, and he patiently walks by our side."

Pope Francis