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SUNDAY PLUS

Send me!

No local prophets

By Fr Denis
McBride C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel Jesus is rejected by his own neighbours. Perhaps the neighbours have a vested interest in focusing on who Jesus was to them, rather than who he is now. It's much easier having a carpenter around the house than a prophet; it is much easier talking about broken chairs than broken lives.

Jesus reminds them that no prophet is accepted in his own homeland, and as if to prove him right the local crowd become so enraged,

they try to throw him off a cliff. But Jesus escapes, and it is no surprise that he never returns home again.

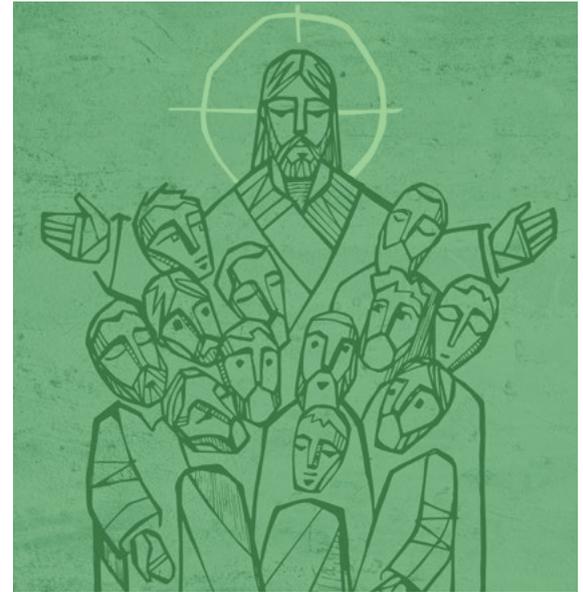
New home

We all need a place where we belong and people whom we can call our own. Usually we call that "home": where you are accepted in love for who you are, but also encouraged to become the person you could be. Perhaps the last people to accept our changes are those who live with us: they're so used to the old ways they can't believe in real change.

Jesus had to leave home

to become the person his Father wanted him to be. He couldn't rely on his own folks to foster his new life and new mission. So, he established a community, a body of people, who would recognise, as St Paul says, their need of each other. That's us. We're home for each other, pledged to support the growing life of the Spirit in each of us. In this gathering here everyone should feel welcome, and everyone should have the freedom to grow. Welcome home!

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



Lord Jesus, make your home in my heart. May we be inseparable companions as I travel towards you.

 Amen.

Set me free!

By James Gallogly

What is it that makes us feel downtrodden? It gets to us all at one time or another. Lockdown exposed this for us in ways we did not imagine.

In prison, many desire to be set free from the offending behaviour or the addiction that roots them in captivity. Hearing the message of Jesus can be a powerful step to freedom.

Too often our men struggle to believe that Jesus loves them; no one else has! Being trapped in the pain of rejection and only rewarded for crime is no way to live.

By bringing the love of Jesus into the life of another, we play a vital role in being a living part of Christ's body. In a prayer, through a card or letter sent or by the consoling visit of a chaplain this can be life-changing. The Spirit of the Lord is given... the downtrodden can seek freedom.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic chaplain in a UK prison.

Feast of the week

Closure of Octave of Christian Unity

The Holy Spirit thus teaches us the concreteness of love for all those brothers and sisters with whom we share the same humanity, the humanity which Christ inseparably united to himself by telling us that we will always find him in the poor and those in greatest need. By serving them together, we will realise once more that we are brothers and sisters and will grow in unity. The Spirit, who renews the face of the earth, also inspires us to

care for our common home, to make bold choices about how we live and consume, for the opposite of fruitfulness is exploitation, and it is shameful for us to waste precious resources of which many others are deprived.

Dear brothers and sisters, may we remain united in Christ. May the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts make us feel children of the Father, brothers and sisters of one another, brothers and sisters in our one human family. May the Holy Trinity, communion of love, make us grow in unity.

Pope Francis

"Dear brothers and sisters, let us not ignore God's word. It is a love letter, written to us by the One who knows us best. In reading it, we again hear his voice, see his face and receive his Spirit. That word brings us close to God. Let us not keep it at arm's length, but carry it with us always, in our pocket, on our phone. Let us give it a worthy place in our homes."

Pope Francis

Today:
Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10
1 Corinthians 12:12-30
Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Monday:
2 Samuel 5:1-7, 10
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday:
Acts 22:3-16
or Acts 9:1-22
Mark 16:15-18

Wednesday:
2 Timothy 1:1-8
or Titus 1:1-5
Luke 10:1-9

Thursday:
2 Samuel 7:18-19, 24-29
Mark 4:21-25

Friday:
2 Samuel 11:1-10, 13-17
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday:
2 Samuel 12:1-7, 10-17
Mark 4:35-41

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13
Luke 4:21-30



about their own families whom they had left behind in order to travel to Bethlehem? Did the magi care about their supporting cast when they set out to follow the star?

During the pandemic, perhaps we realised the importance of the invisible people in our lives. How many of them, for instance, noticed that someone's curtains were, unusually, still closed mid-morning, the newspaper poking out of the letterbox or the milk still on the doorstep and discovered someone in need of help? How many helped to carry food to self-isolating and vulnerable neighbours? Captain Tom Moore deservedly received recognition for his amazing fundraising in his one hundredth year – but what about the unseen heroes and heroines who quietly added a packet of cornflakes or a tin of beans to a foodbank collection?

HIDDEN GIFTS

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus, God's Word becoming human, living among us and learning to speak in human terms. Mary and Joseph taught Jesus to talk – and yet the Gospels don't reveal a single expression that was used in the home in Nazareth and became an ordinary part of Jesus' conversation. We're used to people saying that someone sounds just like one or other parent. Yes, Jesus resembled his Father, but surely some of his words echoed Mary and Joseph? They were hidden people whose words have also gifted the world.

Today let's thank God in a special way for the hidden people who transform our world.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

When a profound silence covered all things and night was in the middle of its course, your all-powerful Word, O Lord, bounded from heaven's royal throne.

FIRST READING Ecclesiasticus 24:1-2. 8-12

PSALM Psalm 147

RESPONSE The Word was made flesh, and lived among us.

Or Alleluia!

- 1. O praise the Lord, Jerusalem! Zion, praise your God! He has strengthened the bars of your gates, he has blessed the children within you. R.**
- 2. He established peace on your borders, he feeds you with finest wheat. He sends out his word to the earth and swiftly runs his command. R.**
- 3. He makes his word known to Jacob, to Israel his laws and decrees. He has not dealt thus with other nations; he has not taught them his decrees. R.**

SECOND READING Ephesians 1:3-6. 15-18

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to you, O Christ, proclaimed to the pagans;
Glory be to you, O Christ, believed in by the world.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 1:1-18

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

To all who would accept him, he gave the power to become children of God.

Next Sunday's Readings:

Isaiah 40:1-5. 9-11
Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16. 21-22



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INVISIBLE PEOPLE

Frost blanketed the early morning countryside the day after the feast of the Epiphany last year. The delivery driver for a well-known online grocery company stood at the open doors of his packed van, scrutinising the paper in his hand. "Yeah. It gets boring loading and unloading the vehicle. I'm not responsible for packing the trolleys and there are nine of them in here, in a van which wasn't built to carry such heavy loads. The people who pack the van don't follow the order of my deliveries. I've got sixteen drop-offs this morning and because there's no system, I might have to unload the whole lot in order to find the next one. Then they've all got to be put back inside the vehicle before I can move on. That's why the last job took an hour to complete."

Online shopping and home deliveries are very convenient for many of us – and have been especially so during the time of coronavirus – but how often do we stop to think of the delivery drivers?

During the lockdown early last year, a picture frequently forwarded on social media declared, "The Post Office has announced that its delivery people are working from home. They will read your mail and contact you if it's important." The joke was meant to make its readers smile but it didn't mention the many times that "posties" go to extraordinary lengths to ensure that letters reach their intended destination. In one long road in Lancashire, for example, the regular postman knocked on every door where he thought the occupants might have grandchildren. A child had directed the envelope in his hand to "Granny and Granddad" without supplying a surname or a house number. There was someone who knew and understood the special relationship between children and their grandparents!

This week, as we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany, we think about the magi travelling long distances in order to find the infant Jesus and present their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In fact, it was a mutual exchange of gifts because, in reaching their longed-for goal, they were uniquely blessed as they knelt beside the manger.

Yet the story in Matthew's Gospel passes over the people who accompanied and supported the magi on their journey: servants who harnessed and loaded the pack animals; who saw to the needs of the magi and the animals before they themselves could eat or rest – and who were, in a real sense, invisible.

Did these invisible people, who were so easily forgotten, have a chance to see Jesus and to meet with Mary and Joseph? What

Hope in the darkness



Sister Janet Fearn FMDM reflects on the "supporting cast" of our everyday lives.



2 JANUARY 2022

2ND SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY (E&W)

YEAR C

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

Prayer over the Offerings

Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray, and in sanctifying them grant that they may profit us for salvation... **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right and just.

The priest gives praise to God and all acclaim:
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

After the Consecration we acclaim the mystery of faith:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.

or
When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup,
we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.

or
Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.

At the end of the Eucharistic Prayer: Amen.

The Communion Rite

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

Deliver us...
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And with your spirit.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Behold the Lamb of God...
Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

or
I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will not walk in
darkness,
but will have the light of life.

Prayer after Communion
Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace,
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift...
Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

At the end of Mass the people respond:
Thanks be to God.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon
O sing a new song to the Lord;
and sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

All make the Sign of the Cross as the priest says:

Priest In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

People Amen.

The priest greets the people in one of these ways:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.
And with your spirit.

or
Grace to you and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ.
And with your spirit.

or
The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

Penitential Act
One of the following acts of penance is now made:

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have
failed to do,

(all strike their breast and say:)

through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

or
Have mercy on us, O Lord.
For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
And grant us your salvation.

or
Lord, have mercy. *or* Kyrie, eleison.
Lord, have mercy. Kyrie, eleison.

Christ, have mercy. *or* Christe, eleison.
Christ, have mercy. Christe, eleison.

Lord, have mercy. *or* Kyrie, eleison.
Lord, have mercy. Kyrie, eleison.

After the absolution all respond: Amen.

The Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good
pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works... **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading Nehemiah 8:2-6. 8-10

A reading from the book of Nehemiah.
Ezra read from the law of God and the people
understood what was read.

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the
assembly, consisting of men, women, and

children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh month. On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose. In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, “Amen! Amen!”; then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law of God, translating and giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and Ezra, priest and scribe (and the Levites who were instructing the people) said to all the people, “This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.” For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law.

He then said, “Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm Psalm 18

R. Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

1. The law of the Lord is perfect, it revives the soul.
The rule of the Lord is to be trusted, it gives wisdom to the simple. **R.**
2. The precepts of the Lord are right, they gladden the heart.
The command of the Lord is clear, it gives light to the eyes. **R.**
3. The fear of the Lord is holy, abiding for ever.
The decrees of the Lord are truth and all of them just. **R.**
4. May the spoken words of my mouth, the thoughts of my heart, win favour in your sight, O Lord, my rescuer, my rock! **R.**

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-30

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

(For shorter form read between > <)

You together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.

> Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. < If the foot were to say, “I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body,” would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, “I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body,” would that mean it was not part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I do not need you,” nor can the head say to the feet, “I do not need you.”

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and so that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

> Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it. < In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, the third to teachers; after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders, those with many languages. Are all of them apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and all interpret them?

> The word of the Lord. <

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives. Alleluia!

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

This text is being fulfilled today.

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read, and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,

to proclaim liberty to captives

and to the blind new sight,

to set the downtrodden free,

to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, “This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Homily

The Profession of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father almighty,

maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored

and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The bidding prayers now follow:

Let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

If the prayers of blessing are said aloud the people acclaim each time:

Blessed be God for ever.

Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters)...

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands

for the praise and glory of his name,

for our good

and the good of all his holy Church.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.*

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works... **Amen.**

FIRST READING Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

A reading from the book of Nehemiah.

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The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

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RESPONSE: *Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life.*

1. The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.
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GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

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Or

*I am the light of the world, says the Lord;
whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift... **Amen.**