

SUNDAY PLUS

Something more

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

// As we go marching, marching,
We battle too for men
For they are women's children
And we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes.
Hearts starve as well as bodies.
Give us bread but give us roses."

People don't just need bread. They need something more. In the words of a wonderful song by Judy Collins:

"Our lives shall not be sweated
From birth until life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies
Bread and roses, bread and roses!"

When, in 1912, millowners cut the hours and wages of immigrant textile workers in Massachusetts, they hadn't bargained for the response of the women, who refused to stay silent. They wanted more than bread. Their words echoed the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: people cannot survive on bread alone – "Hearts starve as well as bodies."



But we found this out, didn't we, as we watched the heartbreak of Grenfell survivors, the devastation of floods and storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin which battered the UK in less than seven days, the war in Ukraine, the massacre of 29 schoolchildren in Uvalde in Texas? People reassessed their priorities. Life is more precious than the latest technology. Food and drink are vital – but so is the feeling of support and the hug of compassion. People who have experienced tragedy learn the hard

way and rediscover the importance of family time, the countryside, laughter, simple things that had perhaps been previously taken for granted.

There are two ways of looking at a rose. We can regret that roses have thorns or we can celebrate the fact that thorns have roses. We need the basics for survival, but we also need to rediscover the roses in our lives.

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Lenten prayer

By Henri Nouwen

The Lenten season begins. It is a time to be with you, Lord, in a special way, a time to pray, to fast, and thus to follow you on your way to Jerusalem, to Golgotha, and to the final victory over death.

I am still so divided. I truly want to follow you, but I also want to follow my own desires and lend an ear to the voices that speak about prestige, success, pleasure, power and influence. Help me to become deaf to these voices and more attentive to your voice...

I have to choose thoughts that are your thoughts, words that are your words and actions that are your actions. There are not times or places without choices. And I know how deeply I resist choosing you.

Please, Lord, be with me at every moment and in every place. Give me the strength and the courage to live this season faithfully, so that, when Easter comes, I will be able to taste with joy the new life that you have prepared for me. Amen.

"We need to stop and ask ourselves what has led our world to see conflict as something normal and how our hearts can be converted and our ways of thinking changed, in order to work for true peace in solidarity and fraternity."

Pope Francis

Feast of the week Wednesday 1 March

St David of Wales (500-589)

The birth of St David is the stuff of legends. To summarise: it was apparently foretold to St Patrick (born nearby) 100 years before David was born on a Pembrokeshire cliff, during a storm, to a mother (Non) who subsequently became a nun and eventually canonised herself! Both David's parents were descended from Welsh royalty and some of his supporters also claim that he was King Arthur's nephew.

What is certain is that, as an adult, David became a monk and eventually, Archbishop of Wales, founding twelve monasteries, including Menevia (St David's) and Glastonbury. The communities led prayerful, hospitable, very austere lives; for instance, pulling the plough themselves rather than using animals.

David's last words were: "Be joyful, brothers and sisters. Keep your faith and do the little things that you have seen and heard with me."

In 1120, Pope Callistus II canonised David who, shortly afterwards, was declared the patron saint of Wales.