

SUNDAY PLUS

Take a risk!

Waiting together

By Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

At the beginning of the Gospel Luke showed us that Mary's response to the word of God was to let it happen. Let it be. Let it become. Let it take shape in her. Now, in his Acts of the Apostles, Luke shows us how, at the beginning of the Church, the whole community responds to the word like Mary first did: they wait attentively to let the word of God happen in their lives. They have a conviction that the word will happen where they are, not somewhere else. And they wait together because together is the place where the Spirit comes.

And that is what we are invited to do as we approach the feast of the Spirit at Pentecost. We are challenged to wait together around the promise of Jesus; to share the conviction of the first community that the Spirit of God will happen here, where we are. The promise of Jesus which gathered the first community is the same promise which gathers us together. We have all come here to pray as a community for the blessing of the Spirit. And like the first community, we have the word of God at the centre of our assembly. So we wait. We wait in the knowledge that someone wants to reach us, someone wants to visit us with power.



Our prayer is to let it be. Let it happen. Let what God has said be done in us. Only in that way is the work of God accomplished in the world of today and tomorrow.

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

“Jesus takes a chance with each of us. Understand this: Jesus is called Jesus; he is not called Pontius Pilate. Jesus does not know how to wash his hands of people: he only knows how to take a risk!”

Pope Francis

Risk-takers

By Canon Paul
Douthwaite

When a prisoner dies, a memorial service is held so that others can celebrate the life of the person. At one memorial service, a tribute was being delivered in which the prisoner was described as mean and miserable. The prisoner delivering the tribute then went on to say, “But he was our mean and miserable friend”. Despite his reputation, his ways and how he had been with other prisoners, when he was diagnosed with a terminal illness, the other

prisoners rallied. They took a risk, put aside their hard fronts, and murderers and drug dealers alike cared for their dying brother. They washed, they fed, they carried.

In his last hours, whilst at table and in prayer, Jesus describes to his closest friends his impending sacrifice as an example for them to follow. As he became powerless for them, so they too must be lowly for others. If the hardest of criminals can follow Jesus' example, we can too!

Canon Paul Douthwaite is the National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons and HMPPS Roman Catholic Faith Advisor.

Feast of the week
Monday 22 May

Bl John Forest

(1471-1538)

Oxford-born Bl John Forest couldn't escape the attention of Henry VIII. The Franciscan friar was confessor to Catherine of Aragon at the time Henry was trying to divorce his queen in favour of Anne Boleyn. It was therefore unlikely that he could either support Henry or sign the Oath of Supremacy, accepting the king as Supreme Head of the Church in England.

In November 1532, Forest publicly denounced Henry's

divorce plans from the pulpit at St Paul's Cross. In 1533 he was imprisoned in Newgate, charged and found guilty of treason for his resistance to Henry's wishes to divorce Catherine, and of heresy for denying the king's spiritual claims.

Condemned to death, the then statutory penalty for heresy was to be burned at the stake. Treason meant either beheading or being hanged, drawn and quartered.

Forest, the only Catholic martyr of the Reformation in England to be burned at the stake, died at Smithfield on 22 May 1538.

Lord, when I was a child, I took risks that, years later, I would never dare consider. Yet it's good to sometimes step out into the unknown without fearing the consequences. Lord, take my hand and let me walk with you. Amen.

Today: Acts 1:12-14, 1 Peter 4:13-16, John 17:1-11
Monday: Acts 19:1-8, John 16:29-33
Tuesday: Acts 20:17-27, John 17:1-11
Wednesday: Acts 20:28-38, John 17:11-19
Thursday: Acts 22:30, 23:6-11, John 17:20-26
Friday: Acts 25:13-21, John 21:15-19
Saturday: Mass in the Morning; Acts 28:16-20, 30-31, John 21:20-25
(E) St Augustine of Canterbury (Feast): 1 Thessalonians 2:2-8, Luke 10:1-9
Next Sunday: Acts 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13, John 20:19-23