

SUNDAY PLUS

Celebrate life

Welcoming the stranger



By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

The Israelites were commanded to love the strangers as they loved themselves. The reason for this was no further than their own experience: they were to remember the time when they were the outsiders, when they were out of their element.

Strangers ceased feeling estranged when they were offered hospitality. Not surprisingly, hospitality came to be regarded as one of the primary virtues. Especially for a nomadic people,


hospitality could be a matter of life and death: travellers depended for their survival on the hospitality of strangers. The stranger, the wayfarer, the outsider, the shadow figure – anyone outside his or her home territory or natural space – was regarded as someone deserving special care. If the host was an enemy of the stranger, the act of hospitality was seen as a sign of reconciliation.

In the tradition of Israel the simple questions which we ask to unmask the stranger (Who are you? Where do you come from? Why are you here?) were reserved for the time after hospitality had been offered and accepted, and the guest

had bathed and rested and been fed. Guests were allowed to wear the mask of the stranger until they had experienced the courtesies of hospitality. In that atmosphere they then revealed themselves. That tradition is celebrated in the ancient greeting:

*Hail guest, we ask not what thou art;
If friend, we greet thee, hand and heart;
If stranger, such no longer be;
If foe, our love shall conquer thee.*

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

Help me, Lord, not to give up. Let me hold your hand in good times and bad, in all of life's ups and downs, successes and failures.  Amen.

The joy of the senses

Helen Keller lost her sight and hearing as a toddler. Aged seven, she learned to read and write using Braille. Helen eventually became the first deafblind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

"I who am blind can give one hint to those who see: use your eyes as if tomorrow you would be stricken blind. And the same method can be applied to the other senses. Hear the music of voices, the song of a bird, the mighty strains of an orchestra, as if you would be stricken deaf tomorrow. Touch each object as if tomorrow your tactile sense would fail. Smell the perfume of flowers, taste with relish each morsel, as if tomorrow you could never smell and taste again. make the most of every sense; glory in the beauty which the world in all the facets of pleasure reveals to you through the several means of contact which Nature provides. But of all the senses, I am sure that sight is the most delightful."

Helen Keller

Think of some ordinary human experience such as a joyful reunion, a moment of disappointment, the fear of being alone, compassion at the sufferings of others, uncertainty about the future, concern for a loved one, and so forth. But we need to develop a broad and profound sensitivity to what really affects other people's lives.

Pope Francis

Feasts of the week
Wednesday 1 November
All Saints
Thursday 2 November
All Souls

Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

Based on the words of St Teresa of Avila

Today:
Exodus 22:20-26
1 Thessalonians 1:5-10
Matthew 22:34-40

Monday:
Romans 8:12-17
Luke 13:10-17

Tuesday:
Romans 8:18-25
Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday:
Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12

Thursday:
Isaiah 25:6-9
Romans 5:5-11
Matthew 11:25-30

Friday:
Romans 9:1-5
Luke 14:1-6

Saturday:
Romans 11:1-2, 11-12,
25-29
Luke 14:1, 7-11

Next Sunday:
Malachi 1:14 – 2:2, 8-10
1 Thessalonians 2:7-9, 13
Matthew 23:1-12