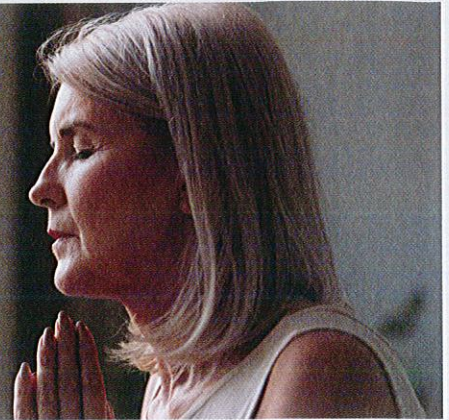


SUNDAY PLUS

Prayer first

To God through prayer



by Fr Paul Douthwaite

The Gospels give us an insight into the ministry of Jesus which, prior to his passion, death and resurrection, is dominated by miracles. In today's Gospel we encounter what could be described as a "flurry" of both physical and spiritual healing miracles. Revolving around the physical healing of Simon (Peter)'s mother-in-law, Jesus embarks upon assisting all who came to

him in need. These encounters have been described as "The Grace of Disaster". In the midst of what appears to be for the individual a catastrophic situation, the grace of God genuinely abounds.

It is very easy to be overwhelmed by Jesus' power to heal instantaneously and to overlook that which is the lasting result of his actions. The grace received through healing enables and guides the recipient to enter into

a deeper relationship with God. It is not surprising, therefore, that following his "flurry" of healing, Jesus "went off to a lonely place and prayed there"! He intrinsically links his ministry of healing with maintaining his relationship with the Father.

What appears to be an account of a healing is in fact a gospel instruction. The disciple, by virtue of baptism, is called to share in the ministry of Christ and engage

in "The Grace of Disaster". In taking those events in life that, humanly speaking, could be considered a "disaster" to God in prayer, the disciple is following Jesus' example. It is by entering into a deeper relationship with God through prayer that the spirit can be refreshed and needed grace can be obtained.

Fr Paul Douthwaite is the National Catholic Chaplain for Prisons and HMPPS/NOMS Catholic Faith Adviser.

See. Pray. Act.

by Emerald O'Hanrahan


I often struggle with action: I'm a brilliant procrastinator. Recently, I've noticed that if I start my day with exercise and prayer or meditation, somehow the day flows a bit more easily, and I find that the things that need doing don't feel so overwhelming.

When I was a teenager, I had a long time away from the Church, and used to go to Quaker meetings. I was so inspired and nourished by their example.

They provided a wonderful blueprint for Spirit-led action, coming out of contemplation, quiet and discernment.

When I returned to my Catholic roots, it was such a joy to find the rich treasure we have in our faith: the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius; contemplative prayer; the writings and lives of Catholic mystic saints - all the many tools, inspiration and examples we have, helping us find strength and energy to take the action of God into the world.

Emerald O'Hanrahan is best-known as Emma Grundy in the BBC Radio 4 series, *The Archers*.

Lord Jesus, teach me to pray.  Amen.

Roses may be prayers

by Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Many years ago I drove a pair of prospective buyers to the nearby home of a local millionaire. Such was not my usual occupation but, unlike the would-be buyers, I both knew where the house was situated and was also curious to see it for myself.

The householder was away from home, so his gardener conducted us around the property. We stopped beside a huge, magnificent rose garden. "The owner had these planted in a single day", he said, "so that his wife could come home to roses." He

laughed and pointed to one particularly beautiful bush. "This is the best of the lot - and was free with a tank of petrol."

We've all stood in a rose garden and admired the flowers' loveliness.

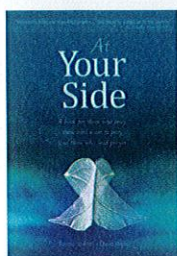
In some Latin American countries, people say that a rose is a prayer.

The next time you are surrounded by roses, pause and reflect that you may be encircled by prayers. God is good!

Sr Janet Fearnis is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

"Each day we pray: Lord, may your kingdom come. With these words, we want our own lives and actions to become a hymn of praise."

Pope Francis



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A collection of prayers that are deeply rooted in real life, often funny, sometimes poignant, always inspiring. They are accompanied by scripture quotes, thought-provoking insights from inspirational Christians and questions for deeper reflection.

Today:
Job 7:1-4, 6-7
1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39

Monday:
Genesis 1:1-19
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday:
Genesis 1:20 - 2:4
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday:
Genesis 2:4-9, 15-17
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday:
Genesis 2:18-25
Mark 7:24-30

Friday:
Genesis 3:1-8
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday:
Genesis 3:9-24
Mark 8:1-10

Next Sunday:
Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1
Mark 1:40-45