

# SUNDAY PLUS

True leadership

## Feed the hungry?

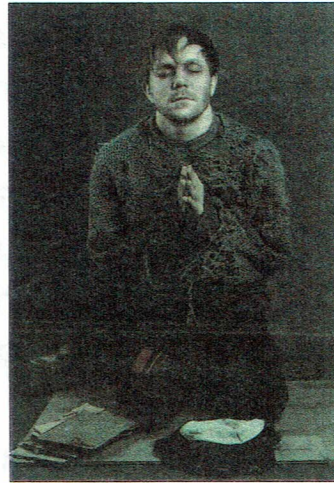
by Denise Cottrell-Boyce

Last week I gave a young man a cup of coffee and a flapjack. He was nineteen, sitting in a dirty sleeping bag. He had beautiful blue eyes and a scar (not new) that showed that he had been bottled. I wasn't giving him money because homeless charities warn us not to. I had taken the time to queue up in the nearest coffee shop. I was feeling mildly virtuous.

The boy gave me short shrift. "I don't want it," he said. "People are always buying me tea. I'm sick of it.

There's only so much tea a man can drink. I need money." In today's Gospel, Jesus praises those who give food to people who are hungry. I gave food to a homeless youth. Was that good? He didn't think so. He said he wanted money for a bed. He also wanted to tell me a few facts about life on the street. I know that some of it probably wasn't true. I left confused about the answer to the simple question: what would Jesus do?

I've vacillated about this so often. I'm always hoping someone more knowledgeable or more holy than I am will give me the definitive answer.



But the problem with the definitive answer is that "the homeless" become an impersonal group, each individual a mere component in a social problem. Less and less like Christ in disguise.

So when the next homeless person wants money from me, what should I do? Maybe ask them if they would like food before plonking it in their hands. Become better informed about provision for the homeless in my city. But most of all, look them in the eye exchange a few words and pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

*Denise Cottrell Boyce, a theology graduate, is also a catechist and the mother of seven children.*

## No earthly king

By Fr Dominic Robinson SJ

No earthly king. No political ruler. And yet Jesus Christ teaches all of us how to show true leadership in society. He is the good shepherd who searches out the lost, welcomes the outcast, shelters the homeless and feeds the hungry. He has no place for comfortable lip-service to the values of the Gospel while modelling intolerance, closing doors to the stranger, widening the gap between rich and poor, the unacceptable and the unwanted. We will be judged, but not on status, wealth or achievement. Rather, justice embraces the merciful who show the compassion of God by opening doors and welcoming home to his flock all who seek him, whatever they have done, wherever they are from, however much they find themselves on the margins of society. How much that leadership is needed in our world today! How much this feast of Christ the King

teaches us about leadership in today's Britain!

*Fr Dominic Robinson SJ teaches dogmatic and pastoral theology at Heythrop.*



**Loving Lord, you show us that leadership means serving others. When I am tempted to look after my own interests first, teach me to be generous, wise and compassionate. Amen.**

## King of the Universe

by Gerlinde Symons

As Christians, our journey to union with God involves surrendering our own will and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and work through us. Jesus is our perfect example: he obeyed his Father and completed his mission here on earth, and we are called to follow his example. Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, chose to serve those around him rather than rule over people like a conventional king. So rather than expect the world to meet our needs, we are called to "reverse the flow" and serve our fellow men and women in need, just as Jesus did. And there are people all around us – in our families, at our workplace, in our local communities – who are suffering in different ways and need someone to show them that they are loved and not forgotten. Let us reach out to those in need today, and remember the words of St Teresa of

Calcutta: "We can do no great things only small things with great love."

*Gerlinde Symons is a Catholic lay chaplain to two UK prisons.*

“**Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: ‘Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?’ If you don’t ask those questions, your governance will not be good.**

**Pope Francis**

Today: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17  
1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28  
Matthew 25:31-46

Monday: Daniel 1:1-6, 8-20  
Luke 21:1-4

Tuesday: Daniel 2:31-45  
Luke 21:5-11

Wednesday: Daniel 5:1-6, 13-14,  
16-17, 23-28  
Luke 21:12-19

Thursday(E&W): Romans 10:9-18  
Matthew 4:18-22

Thursday (S): St Andrew (Solemnity):  
Wisdom 3:1-9; Romans  
10:9-18; Matthew 4:18-22

Friday: Daniel 7:2-14  
Luke 21:29-33

Saturday: Daniel 7:15-27  
Luke 21:34-36

Next Sunday: Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1,  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:33-37