

# SUNDAY PLUS

God first!

## Give back to God

by Fr Anthony Chantry  
MHM

A wise person once wrote that promoting justice is about deciding what belongs to whom and then giving it back to them. I suspect that if we all took this seriously as a country, our overseas aid budget would jump tenfold!

So when Jesus today invites us to give back to Caesar what belongs to him, and to God what belongs to God, I am sure that, as always, his mission of proclaiming the utter goodness of God and his overwhelming love of us and the world was in his motivation.

Perhaps what we need to give back to the Caesars of this world are the greed, the vanity, the intolerance and the selfishness that seem to dominate their agenda. What we are invited to give to God is our utter conviction to love as Jesus loved, wherein lies our power.

World Mission day alerts us once again to the fact that many countries throughout the world suffer horribly from self-serving Caesars. South Sudan, for example, though now independent, is a country with a



Angela Wells/Jesuit Refugee Service

long history of violent conflict and shameless exploitation.

Justice will only come about when peace is restored, and there will only be peace when there is just governance. This requires the very courageous refusal of the Caesars who promote the politics of division, dominance and repression.

Giving to God our commitment to

be one with those like our suffering brothers and sisters in South Sudan who are struggling to bring about a just and peaceful world is the reason we have been chosen.

What will you give back to God today?

Fr Anthony Chantry is the National Director of Missio UK. [www.missio.org.uk](http://www.missio.org.uk)

## Personal, close and impossible to ignore

by Dame Mary Richardson

There is something very special about one's own name. It is said to have psychological importance and people hear their own name when, for various reasons, they can distinguish nothing else. Isaiah tells us that God called Cyrus by his name. Our hearts lift and respond because that call, to us all, by our own name, is personal, close and impossible to ignore. We hear it through the noise of daily life. We are, as both Paul and Isaiah tell us, God's "chosen one".

No such call had been listened to by the Pharisees who, yet again, just wanted to trap Jesus. The ease with which he dealt with them and sent them away, tail between legs,

is almost laughable. Perhaps the consequences of listening to his call would have been too uncomfortable to contemplate and intellectual games, trying to trap Jesus, provided the Pharisees with distraction from the alarming possibility of responding and changing.

Dame Mary Richardson is the President of SOS Children's Villages.

**Lord, take my hands to do your work; my feet to go your way; my eyes to see as you do; my tongue to speak your words; my mind so that you will think in me; my heart so that you will love, in me, the whole of humanity. Amen.**

## Mission at home

by Des Kelly

Christians can sometimes be faced with a real dilemma – how to be a Christian in a secular world where the law is sometimes unchristian. However, true Christians will strive to be good citizens of their country, and at the same time good citizens of the kingdom of heaven.

The Church teaches that parents are the first educators of their children.

**“ All peoples and cultures have the right to receive the message of salvation which is God's gift to every person. This is all the more necessary when we consider how many injustices, wars, and humanitarian crises still need resolution. Missionaries know from experience that the Gospel of forgiveness and mercy can bring joy and reconciliation, justice and peace.**

Pope Francis

Today: Isaiah 45:1, 4-6 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5 Matthew 22:15-21	Monday: Romans 4:20-25 Luke 12:13-21	Tuesday: Romans 5:12, 15, 17-21 Luke 12:35-38	Wednesday(E&S): Romans 6:12-18 Luke 12:39-48	Wednesday (W): Six Welsh Martyrs & Companions (Feast): Hebrews 11:33-40; John 12:24-26 or 15:18-21 or 17:11-19	Thursday: Romans 6:19-23 Luke 12:49-53	Friday: Romans 7:18-25 Luke 12:54-59	Saturday: Ephesians 2:19-22 Luke 6:12-19	Next Sunday: Exodus 22:20-26 1 Thessalonians 1:5-10 Matthew 22:34-40
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