

SUNDAY PLUS

Searching for Jesus

Meet Jesus in other people



by Mary Bell

Unfortunately, moaning is the default setting for so many of us, rightly in some cases, but often as an instinctive response to rather trivial everyday inconveniences. Of course life has its demands and disappointments but we Christians have a source of hope in Jesus himself. In his own day, like a modern celebrity, he could not

go anywhere without being mobbed. They brought their sick relatives and friends: they sought his undoubtedly charismatic presence for healing and the comfort of his words. He had to hide away to get any privacy, even to say his prayers, because everybody was looking for him.

But that did not stop him. He continued visiting all the towns and villages, healing bodies and hearts by bringing his message of love and forgiveness even when he must have been tired and dusty from travel, hot and footsore, worrying his friends who were concerned for his well-being.

We still have his message. Instead of moaning we should also be bearers of the good news that God loves us and if we love our fellow human beings, with the support of Jesus, minor irritations can be soothed and even major problems confronted.

"It is the depths of self that are in need of healing", wrote Brother Roger of Taizé. We can seek out Jesus and find him not only in others but also within our own souls. He invites us to follow him. When we lighten the trials of others, Christ is the one we encounter.

Mary Bell is a grandmother and a retired teacher who continues to use her skills in the University of the Third Age.

Hide and seek

by Dom Dominic Mansi OSB

A little boy came home from church and said that the vicar had told them that God was everywhere.

"This is indeed true", said his mother.

"Is he in the oven when it's hot?" he asked

"Yes indeed" came the reply.

"Is he in the cupboard with the cups in?"

"Certainly"

The boy thought for a moment, "Is he in the tea-bag tin?"

By now his mother was getting irritated with him and snapped "Of course!"

The boy slammed the tin shut and said triumphantly "Got him!"

We cannot capture God. Most of the time, we stumble in the dark, searching for God just as the people were doing in today's Gospel.

A little jingle:

"Love is like a butterfly

The more you chase it, the more it eludes you.

But if you stand still,
It will come and gently rest in your hands."

Be calm, God will find you.

Dom Dominic Mansi OSB is a monk of Downside Abbey.

Teach me to seek you, and reveal yourself to me as I seek, because I can neither seek you if you do not teach me how, nor find you unless you reveal yourself. Let me seek you in desiring you; let me desire you in seeking you; let me find you in loving you; let me love you in finding you.

St Anselm of Canterbury

In unexpected places

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

It sounds crazy. I was nineteen years old, a biology student dissecting a cockroach – and God found me. Examining the insect under the microscope, it was so incredibly beautiful that, instead of continuing the dissection, I sat and prayed for almost a quarter of an hour.

Why did God choose a cockroach? I have no absolutely no idea. I wonder if anyone else connects God's existence, attention to detail and overwhelming love with a dead cockroach in a biology lab.

God has a great ability to pop up without prior notification and in the most unexpected places. Is it any wonder that we speak of the "God of surprises"?

Jesus can be equally unpredictable, sometimes playing hide-and-seek and sometimes amazingly present

when he and his companionship are most needed.

A huge banner once hung on the façade of St Peter's in Rome. It simply said, "We want to see Jesus". Change one word: "I want to see Jesus" – and he's close and personal.

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

“ God has a certain weakness of love for those who are furthest away, who are lost. He goes in search of them... God seeks out the lost because he thinks: ‘I will not lose this son, he is mine! And I don't want to lose him!’

Pope Francis

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

Monday: 1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday: 1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday: 1 Kings 10:1-10
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday: 1 Kings 11:4-13
Mark 7:24-30

Friday: 1 Kings 11:29-32; 12:19
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday: 1 Kings 12:26-32; 13:33-34
Mark 8:1-10

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