

SUNDAY PLUS



LIVERPOOL 2018
ADOREMUS

Grow and flourish

Flourish and be fruitful



by Fr Denis Blackledge SJ

Remember when the teacher at primary school asked you to bring a jam jar full of soil and a seed of some sort to plant in it? You didn't have to stay in school 24/7 to make sure it grew, but you did have to make sure you watered it. Remember how fascinated you were to watch it grow: how it first went down into the soil and got roots before it jumped out of the soil and produced a lovely flower or shrub or vegetable?

That's how the kingdom comes, says Jesus. It needs prayer and care, but growth will surely come once the seed of faith is sown in your heart. Just as you and I need to take prayer and care from womb to tomb as we celebrate

the annual Day for Life, so it is with our living and growing into kingdom folk, individuals and a community worthy of Jesus.

Once we're planted in the love of our loving creative Lord, we'll inevitably begin to flourish and get ever more deeply rooted in our loving service of our sisters and brothers. And those words from today's psalm will come alive, as we'll still be bearing fruit no matter what age we are, and still be full of sap, still green and fresh.

And remember, the Lord creates each of us with unique gifts. So no need to be looking over my shoulder and wishing for gifts I've not got. Rather, let me just enjoy making the most of my own unique kingdom giftedness.

Fr Denis Blackledge SJ is parish priest of St Francis Xavier, Liverpool. He was Religious Adviser to Sean Bean for the BBC1 series Broken.

Nurture and cherish

by Katie Knight

The television programme showed a group of primary school children helping to dig up the potatoes and carrots which they themselves had sown and cultivated. "I don't like carrots," declared one small boy, "I prefer pizza." A few minutes later, it was a case of all hands on deck as inexperienced hands peeled and sliced potatoes, and chopped irregularly-shaped carrots and other vegetables.

When the steaming, freshly-prepared vegetable soup found its way into brightly-coloured bowls, the children were all amazed to discover just how delicious soup could be. "This is even better than pizza!" announced the self-proclaimed gourmand.

How many times had concerned parents tried to persuade their offspring to drink the soup which now had vanished with amazing speed? The difference was that, here, the little ones had been involved from "go to whoa" and had taken responsibility for the process.

What we nurture, we also cherish. If that is true of a few common vegetables, isn't it even more true of friendship?

Katie Knight is a freelance Catholic writer.

“The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable.

Pope Francis

Bloom where you're planted

by Christine Clark

Life can play some funny tricks. There you are, minding your own business, getting on with life, doing the best you can. Then, suddenly, out of nowhere, everything can change.

Jennifer's marriage fell apart very suddenly: she discovered her husband's infidelity and he left her there and then. Although devastated and in a state of grief for all she had lost, Jennifer needed to turn her attention to the practicalities that the situation demanded: supporting her children in their loss; financial and practical details to be settled, including selling the family home. Only later could she address her emotional state.

Throughout all this, Jennifer was supported by her friends, family, her

church family, and of course, God. He showed her it was all right to cry, to rant, to swear. She discovered an independent streak in herself and found she could cope alone. She knew she'd rather live thus than in a dishonest marriage. She found strengths and skills she didn't know she had. A friend told her she was different now, stronger. She had flourished. She had come through.

Christine Clark has recently retired from the editorial staff of Redemptorist Publications.

Lord of my life, may you be also the Lord of my love. Amen.



Today: Ezekiel 17:22-24 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 Mark 4:26-34	Monday: 1 Kings 21:1-16 Matthew 5:38-42	Tuesday: 1 Kings 21:17-29 Matthew 5:43-48	Wednesday: 2 Kings 2:1, 6-14 Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18	Thursday: Ecclesiasticus 48:1-14 Matthew 6:7-15	Friday: 2 Kings 11:1-4, 9-18, 20 Matthew 6:19-23	Friday(E): St John Fisher & Thomas More (Feast): 2 Maccabees 6:18, 21, 24-31 Matthew 24:4-13	Saturday: 2 Chronicles 24:17-25 Acts 13:22-26 Matthew 6:24-34	Next Sunday: Isaiah 49:1-6 Acts 13:22-26 Luke 1:57-66, 80
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