

SUNDAY PLUS



LIVERPOOL 2018
ADOREMUS

See differently

Having a heart

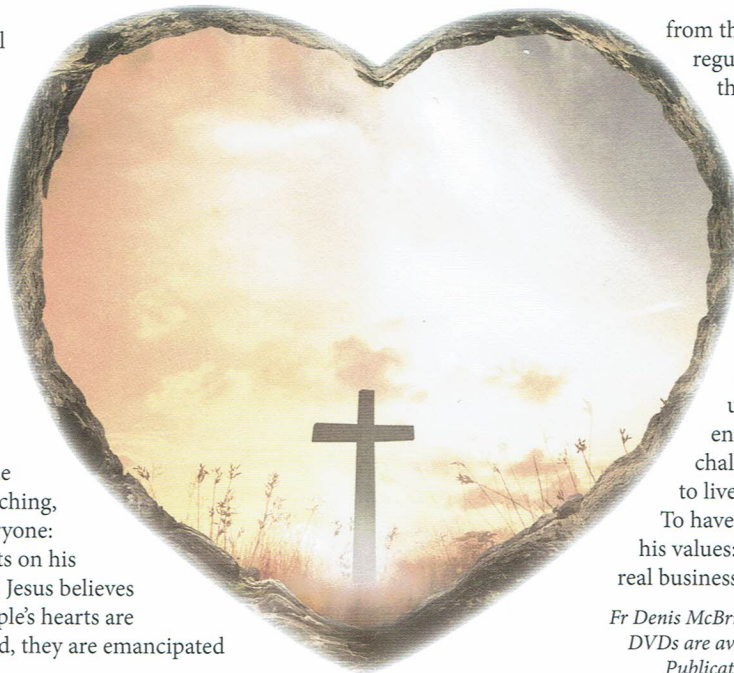
by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

In today's Gospel Jesus is accused of flouting sacred tradition. Religious officials from Jerusalem want to know why Jesus permits his disciples to disregard the unwritten tradition of the elders. The problem is that the disciples do not wash their hands before they eat. The complaint is not that the disciples ignore good hygiene, but that they ignore the tradition of ceremonial washing. In doing this they are numbered among the unclean.

For Jesus, uncleanness is a matter of what proceeds from the human heart, not what is swallowed. It's not people's diet that interests Jesus, it's their heart condition.

Jesus is interested in the stirrings of the human heart, the personal issues that preoccupy us and influence our choices and behaviour. The territory

within, with all its complex emotions and desires, holds Jesus' attention. He knows that no external law can change people's hearts, even if it makes them socially conform. That is why, when he began his preaching, he invited everyone: "Set your hearts on his kingdom first". Jesus believes that when people's hearts are centred on God, they are emancipated



from the litany of human regulations that would script their every move.

For many of his hearers, what Jesus said was bad news because it contradicted the tradition they honoured. We call it good news, Gospel, because it is a word that liberates us from a world of endless regulations. It also challenges us and invites us to live a religion of the heart. To have a heart for Jesus and his values: this will always be our real business as Christians.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Broken traditions

by Dr Barbara Spender

In my 1950s childhood, Sunday church attendance was taken for granted. I never questioned this. Nor did I ask why our parents didn't always accompany us. Perhaps, for them, Sunday services represented the luxury of an hour alone together.

Today the Church competes for our attention against multiple activities, and entertainments. Church membership is not taken for granted. We who continue to worship do so not from habit but as the consequence of a conscious decision; unthinking absence of faith may claim to be the default position.

We can regret the loss of the comforting certainties of childhood but having to think about our place in the world and what really matters to us makes our faith more real.

Increasingly, our world prioritises choice over conformity. Archbishop Justin Welby's statement, "Faith is no longer inherited. It's a matter of choice", reminds us that deciding to be a Christian is the truly aspirational choice.

Barbara Spender is a freelance editor and also a local magistrate.

Loving Lord, help me to break new ground. Help me to show compassion even when it is tough and I'd prefer to take the easy way out. Amen.

Different directions

by Eileen Cole

Jesus' disciples knew the rules yet blatantly disregarded them. The pharisees and scribes couldn't understand it. But Jesus knows the heart, the sincerity and motives for behaviour: "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me".

It's not a question of conforming to external rules, but of sincerity of heart; loving and acting without duplicity or hidden motives. We all need to constantly learn how to love better, more disinterestedly. God calls us all to himself and we have to find our way to him. It is a personal quest. It's not about fulfilling rules and prescriptions, though they have their place and can be helpful. They

guide and keep us on track – think of the white lines on our roads controlling the traffic.

There are many styles and ways of travelling and finding our way to God but we're not all called to follow the same road to holiness.

Eileen Cole is a Media Officer with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

“Today, I will ask a question of all of us: what do we feel in the heart when we are walking along the street and we see the homeless; we see children on their own, begging?”

Pope Francis

Today: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8 James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27 Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23	Monday: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Luke 4:16-30	Monday (E): St Gregory the Great (Feast): 1 Thessalonians 2:2-8 Matthew 16:13-19	Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 Luke 4:31-37	Wednesday: 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 Luke 4:38-44	Thursday: 1 Corinthians 3:18-23 Luke 5:1-11	Friday: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5 Luke 5:33-39	Saturday: Micah 5:1-4 or Romans 8:28-30 Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23	Next Sunday: Isaiah 35:4-7 James 2:1-5 Mark 7:31-37
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