

SUNDAY PLUS

Lead in service

Mission: a labour of love

by Fr Fons Eppink MHM

On this World Mission Day we could do worse than to reflectively absorb this saying: “The primary task of the Christian is to make space for God.” Witness grows from lived experience. We can witness to Jesus by word or action and, most importantly, by who we are, our way of living. But we will only be able to do so convincingly if we have heard him with our own ears, seen him with our own eyes and touched him with our own hands. Just

look at the apostles. The basis of their mission was not their knowledge, their training or their character, but their having lived with Jesus. That’s how they very slowly learnt Jesus’ “downward mobility” – a life of selfless service.

Each one of us has a mission, one which does not necessarily mean travelling to distant lands. That mission emerges from a personal relationship. It is seeing, hearing and touching. This can only happen if we make time for prayer. A few minutes – or longer – of silent abiding in the presence of the Lord will nourish that



relationship. Try it! Do this wherever and in whatever way you find most suitable for you. It is only when you are attentive to the inner wellspring of God’s presence deep inside you that it can be given to you to open the eyes of others to this presence among us, so that they too may enter into this

relationship of love.

Mission is a labour of love. We are called upon to sow the seeds. The harvest will come in the Lord’s own time and in the Lord’s own way.

Fr Fons Eppink, a Mill Hill Missionary, spent many years as a missionary in Africa and Asia. Image © Fr Fons Eppink

With open hands

by Gerlinde Symons

We are all called, as baptised Catholics, to follow Jesus and bring the Good News to those we meet. For me, as a prison chaplain, the people I am called to serve are the prisoners and staff at the two prisons where I work. It is a huge privilege for me to walk with those who are searching for God, and to encourage and support them in their desire for a deepening relationship with God.

Prisons are places of great suffering, loneliness, hopelessness and despair. But that is only half the story: I have also found them to be places of fellowship, kindness and growth. Times change and nothing stays the same. Eventually the vast majority of prisoners will be released into their communities.

Today, our Gospel reading challenges us to see where we too, just like Jesus, can serve those around us who need our loving kindness. We too can be a light in their darkness, and together transform the world!

Gerlinde Symons is a lay Catholic chaplain in two UK prisons.

With open hearts

by Paul Higginson

In the *Mission Impossible* films the secret agent is always told “your mission, should you choose to accept it, is...” (there then follows some very tricky task to complete) In today’s Gospel Jesus tells us that our mission is not to become great in the eyes of the world, lording it over each other. He asks us simply to serve one another with open hearts, insisting that he himself has come “not to be served but to serve”.

For us, this service means caring for our family and friends, giving up time to help those in need, putting the interests of others before our own.

In *Mission Impossible*, the message delivered always self-destructs in five seconds. Fortunately for us, Jesus’ Gospel message has survived, passed down through the ages, from one to

another, until it reaches you and me – “your mission, should you choose to accept it, is...” to serve.

Paul Higginson is the assistant principal at the Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for more than thirty years.

Lord of all peoples, sow your seed of love in our hearts. Bring us to search for love and understanding. Help us to be listeners to what is deepest in each other’s hearts. Amen.

“**I desire a Church that knows how to insert itself into the conversations of people, that knows how to dialogue. It is the Church of Emmaus, in which the Lord ‘interviews’ the disciples that are walking discouraged.**

Pope Francis

Today: Isaiah 53:10-11 Hebrews 4:14-16 Mark 10:35-45	Monday: Ephesians 2:1-10 Luke 12:13-21	Tuesday: Ephesians 2:12-22 Luke 12:35-38	Wednesday: Ephesians 3:2-12 Luke 12:39-48	Thursday: Ephesians 3:14-21 Luke 12:49-53	Thursday (W): Six Welsh Martyrs & their Companions (Feast): Hebrews 11:33-40 John 12:24-26 or 15:18-21 or 17:11-19	Friday: Ephesians 4:1-6 Luke 12:54-59	Saturday: Ephesians 4:7-16 Luke 13:1-9	Next Sunday: Jeremiah 31:7-9 Hebrews 5:1-6 Mark 10:46-52
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