

# SUNDAY PLUS



LIVERPOOL 2018  
ADOREMUS

Rest and recuperate

## Smell the sheep

by Fr Denis Blackledge SJ

Our beloved Pope Francis is always on about “smelling the sheep”! He’ll love today’s readings! The first reading, psalm and Gospel revolve around sheep. Being a shepherd – rather, becoming a shepherd, for it’s a lifelong learning process – centres on care and compassion for the sheep. A 24/7 shepherd, as in the time of Jesus and as you can still find in the Lake District or Scotland, knows his or her flock as individuals. They may even have names.

As the beautiful Psalm 23 states: “The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.” And that Good Shepherd, who has laid down his life for each one

of us, gives you and me the privilege and obligation of becoming good shepherds in our turn, laying down our lives daily out of loving service to our sisters and brothers.

As Jesus steps ashore in the Gospel, he sees a large crowd: the story goes on – “And he took pity on them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd”.

Sometimes a translation doesn’t do justice to the full meaning: in the original Greek the word for “took pity” is much stronger. It comes from the word which means “bowels” or “womb”. So a far better translation would say something like “Jesus was gutted”, or “Jesus was full of compassion for”. He noticed the deeply felt, gut-level need in individuals. And he touched individuals from the inside out, just as he does right now with you and



me. Linger on that word, let it reach inside you, and in turn you’ll become an ever better shepherd and guide of those whose lives you’re privileged to touch each day.

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

## Holiday Time

by Catherine McElhinney

Holidays, especially the long summer holiday, are eagerly anticipated in schools and children look forward to the break. By contrast, an increasing number of adults do not take their full holiday entitlement due to concerns about keeping on top of their workload or being seen as lacking commitment. Those who do take a holiday often keep in touch with their workplace or take work with them. And yet the

“**Rest is so necessary for the health of our minds and bodies, and often so difficult to achieve due to the many demands placed on us. But rest is also essential for our spiritual health, so that we can hear God’s voice and understand what he asks of us.**

— Pope Francis

advantages of taking a break are well known: we become more productive after a break, the imagination flourishes, relationships between families and friends can be strengthened, and our emotional and physical health can also benefit.

Jesus clearly recognised the need for his disciples to take a breather from the pressures they were experiencing and to take time apart by themselves for a while.

As we approach holiday time maybe we too can see the value of allowing ourselves to stop and rest.

Catherine McElhinney is a primary school headteacher, is also the author of My Values Diary, available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)

## Rest in the Lord

by Dr Liam Waldron

While it’s a truly blessed thing to be selfless and to do things for others, it can also be exhausting. Patience can wear thin and we can become disillusioned, wondering if we are really making a difference to the lives of others at all. We need time to rest and recuperate – to catch our breath, gather our thoughts and remember why it is that we help others in the first place.

In today’s Gospel, we hear about the apostles who have been busy spreading the good news of Jesus Christ – so busy that they haven’t even had time to eat. Jesus is concerned for them and invites them to take time out to relax. He also invites us to come away to a place of solitude in which we can rest, encounter him in prayer and be nourished for the journey. When we have time with the Lord in prayer and contemplation, we are renewed.

Dr Liam Waldron is the co-author of Intellectual Disability: caring for yourself and others, a book which is part of the Pastoral Outreach series, available from Redemptorist Publications: [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)



**Lord, when I am so tired that all I want to do is to crash out and sleep, let me rest in your arms and in your peace. Amen.**

Today:  
Jeremiah 23:1-6  
Ephesians 2:13-18  
Mark 6:30-34

Monday:  
Micah 6:1-4, 6-8  
Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday:  
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20  
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:  
2 Corinthians 4:7-15  
Matthew 20:20-28

Thursday:  
Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13  
Matthew 13:10-17

Friday:  
Jeremiah 3:14-17  
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:  
Jeremiah 7:1-11  
Matthew 13:24-30

Next Sunday:  
2 Kings 4:42-44  
Ephesians 4:1-6  
John 6:1-15