

SUNDAY PLUS

Gone but not forgotten

Take a chance for others



by Dr Bridie Stringer

Much of our life is spent avoiding risk, and rightly so. We try to provide for those we love by making sure they have wholesome food to eat, safe places in which to live and we strive to instil values which reflect integrity and honesty. Taking chances does not normally come into it.

Today's readings are all about

taking chances. They challenge our default setting for safety and security.

In the first reading, the prophet Elijah invites the widow to feed her guest before she tends to her son or herself, even though there may not be enough food to go round. She thinks she is about to cook the final meal for herself and her son, but ends up feeding, not only Elijah and her son, but also her entire household and is able to do so until

the drought ends and the fields produce their harvest once more.

The widow in Mark's Gospel shows a similar selflessness. She gives her modest offering to the treasury in the presence of the scribes who are more lavish in their spending but less generous in their hearts. They are very visible do-gooders and feel proud of their status as public benefactors. However, Jesus reminds the Temple authorities of their responsibilities

to the widows and the orphans, and his criticism is blistering. They are clearly giving with one hand and taking away with the other.

For us too, the message is clear – taking a chance for others might be the only chance they get and Jesus wants us to do it.

Dr Bridie Stringer, who is married with two daughters, a son-in law and "two adorable grandsons", is also an associate lecturer in Pastoral Theology at St Mary's University, Twickenham.

Living Lord, be with all those whose memories are, today, a confusing mixture of sadness and pride. Give eternal rest to all those whose lives and deaths we remember today in a very special way. Amen.

Remember

by Stephen Davies

Remembering is something we do each time we gather for Mass. Our church building may bring to mind celebrations and commemorations – from baptisms to funerals – held in that place. The Mass itself is a remembrance, as we hear again our shared history and make present Christ's Last Supper.

This weekend, we also call to mind all those who have lost their lives in wars across the years, sadly, even in conflicts over the last twelve months.

Remembering can bring

both sadness and joy. The challenge we face is not just to remember, but to let that remembering change us for the better. We cannot live in the past with regrets. Each time we gather for Mass it helps us look to the future with hope, to when God's kingdom is fully realised. But we cannot live in the future, either.

We must live, remembering the past, inspired by future hope, making concrete in the present our call to be missionaries of God's love.

Stephen Davies is the Red Box Director for Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries.

Poppies are forever

by Catherine Pepinster

Christ's was the ultimate sacrifice for our redemption: he died on a cross "to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself," says Paul's letter to the Hebrews. On Remembrance Sunday we remember those who also paid a price, sacrificing their lives in war, defending their countries.

Remembrance takes many forms. It involves prayer for the dead, but takes practical form too, through donations to charity. The donation that pays for a

Remembrance Sunday poppy combines that practicality with respect for sacrifice.

Charity derives from *caritas*, meaning love. Christ exhorts us to show our love for one another, visiting those in prison, feeding the hungry, offering hospitality to the stranger. Scripture refers often to the plight of widows, often plunged into poverty by the death of a breadwinner.

Yet it is a widow who shows the most generosity in Mark's Gospel; she gives everything she has. She embodies the *caritas* we offer, remembering the dead and helping the living.

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of The Tablet and the author of The Keys and the Kingdom – the British and the papacy from John Paul II to Francis, published by T&T Clark.

“**Looking back, the Christian is a person 'who remembers'; he always asks for the grace to remember! Looking ahead, the Christian is a man or a woman of hope. Amid memory and hope, in the present a Christian follows the path of God and renews the covenant with God.**

Pope Francis



Today:
1 Kings 17:10-16
Hebrews 9:24-28
Mark 12:38-44

Monday:
Titus 1:1-9
Luke 17:1-6

Tuesday:
Titus 2:1-8, 11-14
Luke 17:7-10

Wednesday:
Titus 3:1-7
Luke 17:11-19

Thursday:
Philemon 7-20
Luke 17:20-25

Friday:
2 John 4-9
Luke 17:26-37

Friday (S):
St Margaret (Feast):
Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
or 1 Corinthians 12:31 – 13:13
Matthew 25:31-46

Saturday:
3 John 5-8
Luke 18:1-8

Next Sunday:
Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32