

SUNDAY PLUS

Blessed and broken

Blessed, broken and shared



by Fr Denis Blackledge SJ

There are four key elements in a celebration of each Eucharist – just as Jesus did at the Last Supper, at the feeding of the five thousand, and just as Paul passed on in his first letter to the Corinthian Christians – the priest takes, blesses, breaks and gives the bread. This means that there is no giving, no possible true sharing, without first the breaking. Remember the *Broken* series on BBC1 a couple of years ago, with Sean Bean as Father Michael, an urban parish priest coping with his own brokenness, and that of his parishioners?

Just as Jesus made the crowd welcome, talked to them about the new culture (or kingdom) he had come to bring and cured those who needed healing, so he does for you and me right now, at this celebration of the Eucharist.

What was impossible for the disciples to do, to feed so many, Jesus did simply and without show. But the same four key words were spoken over the loaves and fishes as are said at each Eucharist: Jesus took, blessed, broke and gave. The result is the same for us as for them: “all ate and were filled.”

What matters is that we pick up the pieces and that we don't forget about the scraps. Our Eucharist begins when we

leave church. Our Eucharist needs grounding, earthing, as we learn, day by day, to be ever better sharers, lovers and servants of Jesus and his people. That way, we pass on, as Paul did, what he had received from the Lord – we are slowly but surely turned into the One we receive.

Fr Denis Blackledge SJ was the Religious Adviser to Sean Bean in the BBC television series, *Broken*.

“We, who receive from Jesus our own room and board, are here to prepare a place and a meal for these, our brothers and sisters in need. Jesus became bread broken for our sake; in turn, he asks us to give ourselves to others, to live no longer for ourselves but for one another.”

Pope Francis

Why are people “dis-abled”?

by Cristina Gangemi

Is a person a person because of their bodily movements? How should a body look? Who decides how the body should look? Is it about the way they walk, or do not walk? Is it because of their body or their intellect? What is intellect? Is a human person a body and a spirit or is it a fusion of body with spirit? Whose life is valuable and whose life is not?

In a Church and culture where the concept of “them and us” is removed,

we all accept that we all belong, people are enabled. The barriers that exclude people just would not exist and we would be able to meet each other, recognising our valued place within the “Image of God” and as the “Image of God.” No one person can be excluded from this. However, people do continue to be excluded.

Human love reflects the love of God for all. Human activity takes place against a background of the eternal, which is God.

Intellectual disability: caring for yourself and others is co-written by Cristina Gangemi and Dr Liam Waldron and available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Blessed, not broken

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM


Sr Chris was confined to bed for seven years before she died in 2018. Before that, she had spent twenty four years working as a midwife in Zimbabwe, twelve delivering babies in a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan and eighteen as an assistant prison chaplain in Wandsworth. She found it really hard to be “stuck” in her room, but, somehow, she was rarely alone. People gravitated to her bedside and always came away feeling better for having spent a few minutes with her. Even when Sr Chris was dying, she knew exactly

who had entered her room and smiled radiantly.

Yet her warmest smiles were reserved for whoever brought her Communion. “Have you brought me Jesus?” she would ask.

Sr Chris was one of those wonderful people whose body might be broken, but whose spirit was alive, intact, growing and reaching out to others. She was blessed, not broken. Whom do you know who is both limited and unlimited? Who has touched your heart?

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Jesus, my Lord and my God, I give you my heart and my soul  Amen.