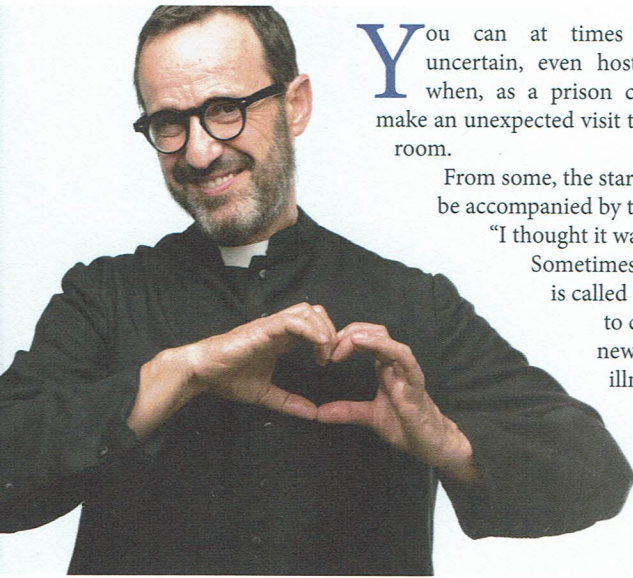


SUNDAY PLUS

Don't give up!

Called and chosen for Good News

by Rev. Paul Broadbent



You can at times receive an uncertain, even hostile response when, as a prison chaplain, you make an unexpected visit to an inmate's room.

From some, the startled look will be accompanied by the comment, "I thought it was bad news!"

Sometimes the chaplain is called to be the first to communicate news of a serious illness, accident or worse involving a close relative. Mostly however, the

purpose of the call is completely the opposite. It is the work of the Good News: simply to say hello, express an interest in, or care for the welfare of an inmate, many of whom are from backgrounds where this may not be the norm. And so it is that, from some, the response can range from the indifferent to the openly hostile. But St Paul tells us, "welcome or not, insist on it."

Jesus tells us that the prophet is not accepted in his home town, but that does not mean abandoning the effort to spread the Good News that each of us is called and chosen to proclaim in whatever way possible and with whatever gifts and graces we have been given. It may not be welcomed.

We may not be welcomed, but we are known, loved and will be supported by the one who loves all. "The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this" writes St Paul.

Our mission is to guide others to the light of the knowledge of the Good News. We may never see the outcome of our efforts, for now, "we see in a mirror, dimly". But when we meet face-to-face with eternal love, we shall know the utter fullness of God. Through our mission, others may realise that they are also eternally known and loved by their creator who awaits their response.

Rev. Paul Broadbent is a Catholic prison chaplain.

“**Heaven doesn't value what you have, but what you give.**

Pope Francis

No "outsiders"

by Paul Higginson

In the Gospel today Jesus finds himself being rejected by the people in his home town and they try to kill him. Why were they so angry with him? Perhaps because he tells them that God's love goes beyond their borders; that Elijah helped a widow from a foreign town and Elisha helped a hated Syrian. The crowd cannot accept the fact that following Jesus will mean changing their deep-rooted negative attitude towards "outsiders". You can almost hear them

saying "Surely we should come first?" But Jesus makes it clear that his message of Good News is for everyone, but especially for people who are marginalised and vulnerable. Pope Francis recently complained that many people want to build walls between themselves and others rather than bridges. Jesus' words today are an uncomfortable and timely reminder that we are called to help spread God's love to all. In his eyes there are no "outsiders".

Paul Higginson is the Assistant Principal at the Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for thirty years.

It's tough but...

by Sr Siobhán O'Keeffe
SSHJM

Our media abounds with glittering award ceremonies; Oscars, BAFTAs, Sports Personality of the Year... accolades of which most of us can only dream! The wonderful news is that you are called to be a prophet, to radiate God's goodness, truth and beauty to all whom you meet. Endowed with your own natural gifts and empowered by the

Holy Spirit you are commissioned to bring God's love and promise to all. The sparkle of God's spirit in your eyes and radiating through your works of mercy will inspire people to want to know more about Jesus. However, like Jesus himself, you may suffer through the message you bear. Be not afraid, our God is with you at every step of the way. Let his light shine into all the dark places of our world.

In his good time, you will be called onto God's red carpet and receive the crown of eternal glory.

Sr Siobhán O'Keeffe is a Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

Lord, why do I sometimes need such determination and willpower to do the simplest, most boring and mundane things that, if I were to get started, would only take a couple of minutes to finish? Help me, Lord, when I'm tempted to give up on the job. Amen.

Today:
Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
1 Corinthians 12:31 - 13:13
Luke 4:21-30

Monday:
Hebrews 11:32-40
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday:
Hebrews 12:1-4
Luke 5:21-43

Wednesday:
Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday:
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Mark 6:7-13

Friday:
Hebrews 13:1-8
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday:
Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21
Mark 6:30-34

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 6:1-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11