

SUNDAY PLUS

Trusted to respond

Entrusted with a gift

by **Natasha Pritchard**

My husband loves to buy a lottery ticket every so often. I know I will be in the minority when I say this, but the thought of winning a large sum of money actually fills me with dread. Yes, it's great to fantasise about endless holidays and no responsibilities, but the reality is, it would be a shock to the system. I didn't do anything to earn that money and don't think I'd get the same pleasure out of spending it as I did with my first month's hard-earned wages.

Like anything in life, we shouldn't expect to be handed something without any effort on our part. If this happens, we lose the sense of satisfaction and accomplishment of having truly earned it. Daily life may sometimes be difficult, but I

couldn't deprive myself of that sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that comes with working for my daily bread.

At first sight, the words of Jesus in today's Gospel seem jarring. They don't fit with our image of the loving and peaceful Christ. He is warning us that faith, like everything in life, comes with a price. For Catholics, our faith can seem to be about giving up, making sacrifices: the rules we should follow, the obligation to go to Mass, our Lenten observances. Yet we are being entrusted with a gift so great, we should hardly expect to be given it without consequence. The faith with which Jesus entrusts us may, as today's Gospel tells us, be one that divides and disrupts, but if we respond to his call, it is the greatest gift we will ever receive.

Natasha Pritchard works in Catholic youth ministry and hospital chaplaincy.



Ready and waiting

by **Lawrence Osborn**

We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses – not that they are paying much attention to us. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews imagines the life of faith as a great race and the cloud of witnesses as the runners. We are called to run with them, following the pacemaker, Jesus, “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”.

But following Jesus is no easy thing. We live in an increasingly secular pagan culture which resents our insistence on the sanctity of life, our commitment to chastity, our inconvenient care for the weak and the marginalised, the stranger

and the alien. Jesus himself warns us that following him will bring us into conflict with the values of this world. So, we must be ready to answer his call and throw off anything that might entangle us.

Dr Lawrence Osborn is an Orthodox layman living in Glasgow.

“A person's dignity does not depend on them being a citizen, a migrant, or a refugee. Saving the life of someone fleeing war and poverty is an act of humanity.”

Pope Francis

Fire and division

by **Sr Thérèse Garman SMP**

Not a newspaper headline of today, but the mission of our Saviour. We think of Jesus as bringing peace and love for a comfortable existence. What we have is a Saviour who says he has come to start a fire and can't wait to see it burning and stating that he hasn't come to bring peace but division in families.

Jesus presents himself as a trouble-maker. The fire of his message and love will divide people. However, at the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples he was giving them a peace the world cannot give and no one can take

away. The final greeting of the Risen Christ was “Peace be with you” – but he warned of the cost.

We cannot sit idly by surrounded by the world's pain and injustice. There can be no peace until God's rule of love, justice and truth is the present reality. Are we prepared to stand up for what we believe? May the Spirit kindle in us the fire of God's love.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence.

Loving Lord, people come in so many shapes, sizes, ages and life situations. Help me to be open and welcoming to everyone whom you send into my life + Amen.

Today:
Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10
Hebrews 12:1-4
Luke 12:49-53

Monday:
Judges 2:11-19
Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday:
Judges 6:11-24
Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday:
Judges 9:6-15
Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday:
Judges 11:29-39
Matthew 22:1-14

Friday:
Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14-16, 22
Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday:
Apocalypse 21:9-14
John 1:45-51

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 66:18-21
Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13
Luke 13:22-30