

SUNDAY PLUS

Alleluia!

From darkness into light

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

When Mary Magdalene walked towards Jesus' tomb on Easter Sunday morning, it was dark – the sun was not shining – but the greater darkness was in her heart. She had seen someone she dearly loved mocked, tortured, crucified and die as a criminal “between heaven and earth”, in other words, in the thinking of her time, rejected by both God and humanity. She had touched Jesus' body, escorted him to the tomb and not had time to finish the job of anointing him according

to custom. Where had she been between Good Friday and Easter Sunday morning? She might have been on her own for at least some of the time; otherwise at least one other woman would have accompanied her on that dark morning.

Alone or with others, Jesus' mother, Mary Magdalene and the disciples broken-heartedly suffered their personal agony which their shared experiences and companionship did not lessen. The light had disappeared from their lives.

To approach the tomb alone required courage. Mary could have faced abuse from the guards. She would have steeled herself to re-encounter her crucified Lord without a companion to offer

moral support. Even if she were seeking some private time alongside Jesus, Mary knew that she faced unbearable emptiness and pain. Yes, the morning was truly dark in a way that had nothing to do with sunshine.

By contrast, after seeing and talking to the risen Jesus, darkness vanished. Hurrying towards the disciples, the darkest night would have seemed light-filled. Despair had turned to hope, sadness to joy, emptiness to overflowing happiness. Jesus had died and had risen. Alleluia!

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


New life and hope

by Daniel Kearney

On a purely functional level the human heart pumps blood around the body and in doing so it keeps us alive and well. On an emotional level the heart is much more than simply this. It has a life of its own. It symbolises, among many things, love, affection and sorrow. It encapsulates the very essence of who we are. It is passionate, strong, vulnerable and fragile. We even use it as a measure our commitment and effort when we say, “I put my heart into it”. In other words, we could give no more. This idea of our heart giving its all for a cause

or a venture is, perhaps, illustrated perfectly in the generosity and selflessness of many people who, quite literally, donate their heart for another person; in doing so they bring new life and hope into a life where there was only darkness and fear.

Daniel Kearney is a former headmaster and teacher of Religious Studies.

Lord, if I'd only
open my eyes
and my heart,
I'd see signs of
your resurrection
everywhere. Fill
me and everyone
I love with your
Easter joy  Amen.

True leadership

by Dr Barbara Spender

There are leaders and there are followers! How often have we heard that and imagined that being a leader is best, the mark of success, while being a follower means just being “one of the herd”?

But is it always such a bad thing to take the less prestigious role?

So many of the great prizes of life bring their own irremediable disappointments. We compete for the “top job,” the chance to reach a position where we can reshape things as we want them to be, only to find ourselves set about with limits, restrictions and events that constantly frustrate us. And then there are the pressures of other

people's expectations, which can rarely be met. A Prime Minister, a President, can force change into being but they will never be universally popular or successful. Change always has unforeseen consequences.

A life of quiet service can achieve so much more.

Dr Barbara Spender is a freelance editor and also a local magistrate.

“True enough, we need to open the door of our hearts to Jesus, who stands and knocks. Sometimes I wonder, though, if perhaps Jesus is already inside us and knocking on the door for us to let him escape from our stale self-centredness.”

Pope Francis

All of us at Redemptorist Publications wish you and yours the fullness of Easter joy and blessings. Happy Easter!

Today:
Acts 10:34, 37-43
Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
John 20:1-9

Monday:
Acts 2:14, 22-23
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday:
Acts 2:36-41
John 20:11-18

Wednesday:
Acts 3:1-10
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday:
Acts 3:11-26
Luke 24:35-48

Friday:
Acts 4:1-12
John 21:1-14

Saturday:
Acts 4:13-21
Mark 16:9-15

Next Sunday:
Acts 5:12-16
Apocalypse 1:9-13, 17-19
John 20:19-31