

SUNDAY PLUS

Home truths

Are we that lost sheep?

by Kasia Greenwood

I remember, as a child, finding the story of the Prodigal Son unfair. I couldn't see why the father should throw a party for the son who had done wrong when the son who had served him faithfully was not celebrated in such a way.

Equally, the parable of the Lost Sheep. Why abandon the ninety-nine just to find one? Surely the one sheep in the flock is not worth the risk and effort?

As is often the case, these parables make a lot more sense to me since becoming a parent. Imagine that lost sheep being your lost child whom you would

do anything to find; that prodigal son being your own child who, having made some bad decisions, had seen the error of their ways and returned home. Would you not celebrate their return, even at the consternation of their siblings? Thinking about it in this way helped me to realise the way in which God loves us as his own children. How

precious we are in his eyes! How he seeks to find us when we lose our way and how he rejoices when we return!

Today, on Home Mission Sunday, perhaps the first thing we should ask ourselves is: are we that lost sheep, hoping to be found and longing to come home? Are we that Prodigal Son, straying down the wrong path, in need of redemption? When thinking about evangelisation, do we need to start by engaging more ourselves?

How can we share our faith and show others the face of Jesus in our actions? The ways in which we act in faith and express that to others in our words and deeds reach out beyond ourselves, perhaps to other lost sheep looking for a way home. Is that not the very essence of home mission?

Kasia Greenwood is mother to two children and works in education.

The "odd-one-out"

by Sian Owen-Owen

The little girl was unable to sit still and didn't fit into the classroom environment.


After many disciplinary actions, exclusions and complaints, the concerned teacher suggested that the child's mother should seek the support of the educational psychologist.

The day came. The psychologist asked appropriate questions and observed the child's restlessness. "There's nothing wrong with her. She's a dancer. Enrol her in a dancing class and see what happens." Thanks to the unexpected insight, the difficulties vanished almost overnight. That little girl, the "odd-one-out" in her class is, years later, a professional dancer. All she

had needed was for someone to recognise and channel her uniqueness.

We all have hidden potential. As the saying goes, "There's no such thing as a stranger: only a friend we haven't yet met." It would be easy to stay behind, looking after the ninety-nine sheep rather than searching for the one that was lost, but bringing that one sheep home might make all the difference.

Sian Owen-Owen is a freelance Catholic writer.

Good Shepherd, bring the lost home. Give hope to those who search without finding, who wait for answers that never seem to come, who yearn for love but live in loneliness. Amen. 

Mission at home

by Rachel Thompson

What a comforting message: someone loves me. I am loved so much that someone will always come and find me, just me. And yet this Gospel holds a real challenge too. I might try to live as Jesus asks by giving food to the ninety-nine in the homeless shelter. While that is good, it's also the easy, sensible choice. Leaving the ninety-nine to search for the one makes little sense but, as Jesus shows us today, it's in meeting the one lost sheep that true happiness is found.

The real challenge comes when I buy a homeless man a sandwich and he offers to take me to the cashpoint.

Jesus takes the time to find me, and I must find time and patience for the lost and most vulnerable in my life. Actually having an

authentic encounter is where I can meet Jesus, and allow Jesus to really find me.

Whilst working as Redemptorist Publications' Children's Editor, Rachel Thompson is also a secondary school teacher, wife and mum.

"Not even ninety-nine sheep could stop the shepherd and keep him enclosed in the fold. He might reason like this: 'Let me do the sum: If I have ninety-nine of them, I have lost one, but that's no great loss.' Nevertheless, he goes looking for that one... that is in the most need, is the most abandoned, most discarded".

Pope Francis

Today:
Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14
1 Timothy 1:12-17
Luke 15:1-32

Monday:
1 Timothy 2:1-8
Luke 7:1-10

Tuesday:
1 Timothy 3:1-13
Luke 7:11-17

Wednesday:
1 Timothy 3:14-16
Luke 7:31-35

Thursday:
1 Timothy 4:12-16
Luke 7:36-50

Friday:
1 Timothy 6:2-12
Luke 8:1-3

Saturday:
St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist
Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-13
Matthew 9:9-13

Next Sunday:
Amos 8:4-7
1 Timothy 2:1-8
Luke 16:1-13