

SUNDAY PLUS

Raise them up!

October is the Extraordinary Month of Mission requested by Pope Francis



Be missionaries of God's love

by Stephen Davies

As we come to the end of the Extraordinary Month of Mission, our Gospel parable is a stark call to humility. When we reach out to others with God's love, it is not because we are better than they are. It should not come from a place of judgement. None of us truly know what another person has experienced, thinks or believes.

Pope Francis urges us to "be missionaries of God's love." Having experienced that love, it's only natural

to want to share it with others. Too often, I find it easier to talk about this; to try to be eloquent and persuasive in speaking about God's love. What comes harder is reflecting God's love to those I meet – including family, colleagues and the person asking for money as I walk down the street. I also have to do this to those I don't meet but who are affected by my actions, like the people who grow the food I buy.

It is through sharing God's love – without judgement, without asking for anything in return, without pitying the people we are helping – that we are true missionaries.

It's what people like Sr Karlo in Ethiopia does. She lives with the Menja people who are ostracised because of their customs. Sr Karlo works to heal divisions, without judging, just treating every person as a child of God. Gradually, the Menja people are feeling welcomed, divisions beginning to fade.

In my own life I need to work to heal divisions. I must try not to judge others, helped by sincerely praying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner".

Stephen Davies is the Red Box Director for Missio, the Pope's own charity for overseas mission.

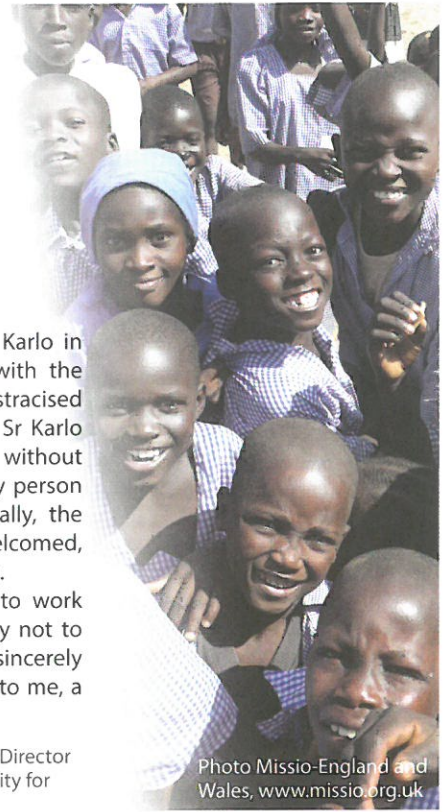


Photo Missio-England and Wales, www.missio.org.uk

Least and last, but not lost

by Sr Janet Fearn
FMDM


In *Fiddler on the Roof*, Tevye and his wife Golde face huge challenges. Their first daughter, Tzeitel, marries a poor tailor instead of an affluent butcher whom she doesn't love. Their second daughter, Hodel, marries a progressive thinker and joins him in exile in Siberia. When their third daughter, Chava, marries a non-Jew, should Tevye and Golde accept the marriage or reject it because it goes against their beliefs? They choose to offer a lifeline. A pogrom during Tzeitel's wedding and the family's expulsion from Anatevka, their village, make their lives even more difficult.

Yet Tevye is in constant dialogue with God. Golde maintains her responsibilities as a Jewish mother.

The entire family are amongst the least important according to the Russian Government of the day and the last to receive support – but they are not lost. Their faith carries them through. They have hope. In facing the unknown, they have a direction.

Have they got something to teach us?

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

Lord, I sometimes wonder what it would be like if I could see myself as you see me. Your mirror is nothing like mine. Help me to see the loveliness you put into my heart  Amen.

Humiliated but reborn

by James Gallogly

When we look in the mirror, what do we see?

In the midst of the daily grind how often do we castigate ourselves as sinners? How often do we feel the need to be rescued from the "lion's mouth"?

I'm sure we all have our moments! Serving a prison sentence can bring such thoughts into sharp relief. When the heavy door slams, all can appear lost. This is where real rehabilitation is possible, where reality can be checked and responsibility (finally, perhaps) taken.

Sadly, broken people can easily break others.

Sometimes we are oblivious to the damage our society inflicts

upon its members. Daily, the gap between rich and poor people is growing wider.

We are quick to dismiss the marginalised; slow to encourage the opportunities to nurture and provide support.

Let us pray for a society and a criminal justice system that works to restore and raise people up.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic prison chaplain in a UK prison.

"If God prefers humility it is not to dishearten us... If the prayer of the proud does not reach God's heart, the humility of the poor opens it wide. God has a weakness for the humble ones. Before a humble heart, God opens his heart entirely."

Pope Francis

Today:
Ecclesiasticus 35:12-14, 16-19
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18
Luke 18:9-14

Monday:
Ss Simon and Jude, Apostles
Ephesians 2:19-22
Luke 6:12-19

Tuesday:
Romans 8:18-25
Luke 13:18-21

Wednesday:
Romans 8:26-30
Luke 13:22-30

Thursday:
Romans 8:31-39
Luke 13:31-35

Friday:
All Saints
Apocalypse 7:2-4, 9-14
1 John 3:1-3
Matthew 5:1-12

Saturday:
All Souls' Day
Isaiah 25:6-9
Romans 5:5-11
Luke 7:11-17

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 11:22 – 12:2
2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2
Luke 19:1-10