

SUNDAY PLUS

Hang in there!

Danger ahead

by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

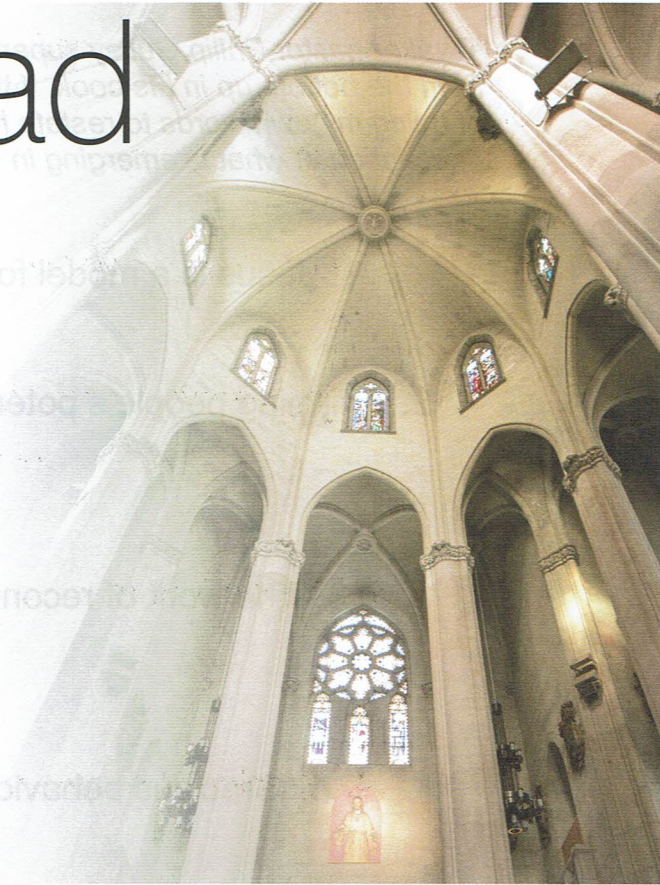
Luke sets the climax of Jesus' ministry in the Temple where Jesus shares his last public teaching to the disciples and the gathered people. Some people draw his attention to the sparkling architecture and splendid furnishings of the Temple; Jesus replies by predicting its destruction. The undoubted beauty of the Temple will not ensure its survival, just as, much later in the Reformation, the beauty and magnificence of the great monasteries did not guarantee their viability. So, sadly, the poet John Keats was mistaken:

*A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness.*

Jesus continues to counsel his hearers not to be terrified by war and tumult, which will not signal the end of time. He goes on to widen the horizon of affliction to include universal strife and natural disasters, famines and pestilences. In a comprehensive catalogue of disaster, Jesus does not camouflage what appears to be cosmic catastrophe.

Set against a casual remark on the beauties of the Temple, Jesus' warnings might appear a thundering over-reaction; but he is hardly going to spend his last public teaching exchanging views on ornamental furnishings. What lies ahead for Jesus, and also for so many people today when they face their prospects, is little comfort and much pain.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk



Where's the good news?

by Sr Thérèse
Garman SMP

Where's the good news in today's Gospel? If Jesus was looking to recruit people for his mission, who would want to volunteer? Yet if we can endure these difficulties, it will win us life. When our world seems to be falling apart, we need two things: perseverance and trust in God. We are here because someone in our past has endured through hard times and trusted. We and our faith are the beneficiaries of others' struggles, finding God in them and trusting. How will we ensure that this precious faith does not end with us?

Jesus calls us to remain faithful, however difficult life might be. Then we'll discover that God has always been with us in our pain and disappointments, in the seeming destruction of the temple that we are. Perseverance and trust are the ways in which we offer God our fallen stones and, stone by stone, God rebuilds a new temple from the rubble, one where the Holy Spirit dwells.

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

Lord, open my heart and my hands to the cries of those who suffer. Help me not to be unkind. Amen.

"The World Day of the Poor wishes to be a small answer that the Church throughout the world gives to the poor of every kind and in every land, lest they think that their cry has gone unheard. It may well be like a drop of water in the desert of poverty, yet it can serve as a sign of sharing with those in need, and enable them to sense the active presence of a brother or a sister."

Pope Francis

Keep on going!

by Theresa Codd

In my role at Survive-MIVA, I am always impressed by the perseverance shown by the beneficiaries (across Africa, Asia and Latin America) of Survive-MIVA's transport grants, for they carry out their work in very trying circumstances. A lack of transport adds to the difficulties. With no transport of their own, they may regularly have to walk for miles in order to provide pastoral care and/or health services to those who are poor or marginalised. Often, they may

have to face other inconveniences, such as being unable to return home from a visit to a remote area due to irregular public transport, being compelled then to seek the hospitality of others. These resilient servants of God keep going, despite all that is thrown at them – sometimes, quite literally, earthquakes, famines, plagues and persecutions. May we imitate their example and persevere in whatever task we have been given to build God's kingdom on earth.

Theresa Codd is Assistant Director of Survive-MIVA (registered charity no. 268745), the Missionary Vehicle Association (www.survive-miva.org).

Today:

Malachi 3:19-20
2 Thessalonians 3:7-12
Luke 21:5-19

Monday:

1 Maccabees 1:10-15.
41-43. 54-57. 62-64
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday:

2 Maccabees 6:18-31
Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday:

2 Maccabees 7:1. 20-31
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday:

1 Maccabees 2:15-29
Luke 19:41-44

Friday:

1 Maccabees 4:36-37. 52-59
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday:

1 Maccabees 6:1-13
Luke 20:27-40

Next Sunday:

2 Samuel 5:1-3
Colossians 1:12-20
Luke 23:35-43