

# SUNDAY PLUS

See differently

## Discerning the greater good

by Dr Bridie Stringer

**W**e are familiar with the saying: “Strike while the iron is hot” or, in the case of today’s first reading from 1 Samuel, “Strike while your enemy is out cold!” However, David does not allow Saul to be harmed because Saul is the anointed leader of his people. The time is not right. David holds the tension between seizing the easy option and discerning the long-term greater good.

The Gospel reading also takes up this theme of looking to discern the wise and compassionate option.

As someone who wears glasses, I am conscious of the importance of an accurate ophthalmic prescription. If done correctly, vision is clear and well-focused.

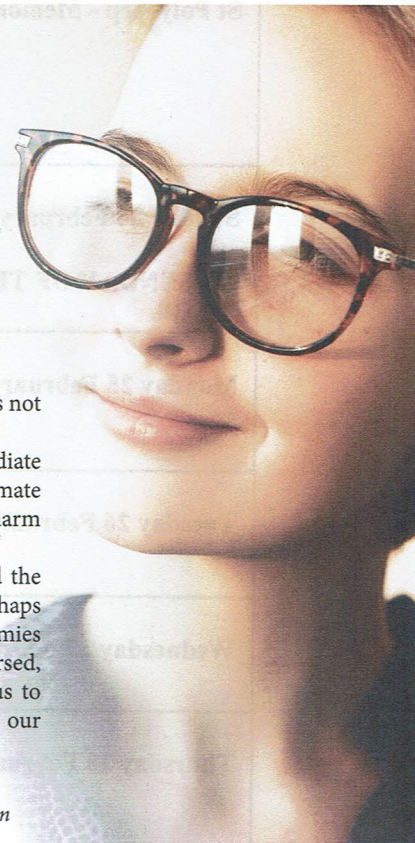
Here Jesus invites us to see the world through his lens of

compassion and love, especially at those times when it is not the easy option.

Perhaps the message for us is to look beyond the immediate challenge before us to the ultimate goal and the ultimate reward and, as a result, those who would seek to do us harm might wonder why we have stood firm and unafraid.

Luke tells us that God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. If we too can show this generosity of spirit, perhaps it will be the turning point for those who were our enemies and now see us as friends. The roles might also be reversed, of course, and the goodness of others might inspire us to recognise that we too are loved. Sometimes we can be our own worst enemy.

*Dr Bridie Stringer, who is married with two daughters, a son-in-law and “two adorable grandsons”, is also an associate lecturer in Pastoral Theology at St Mary’s University, Twickenham.*



## Take your time

by James Gallogly

Despite encouragement to make the most of having Saul at his mercy, David took his time and found space for compassion. That space is a rare gift in our helter-skelter society. Whether at home, at work, in politics and particularly behind the wheel, we can be quick to judge and condemn. The other is clearly wrong, I am right.

Jesus challenges us, just as he challenged the crowds, to see differently. We are invited to look beyond the situation before us to glimpse the humanity, fragility and vulnerability in a fellow traveller. We certainly all want a fair hearing when we make a mistake – do we afford the same courtesy to others?

In a moment of disagreement on a matter of national concern or

when someone indicates incorrectly at a roundabout we would all benefit from remembering that, “there but for the grace of God go I.” Compassion may then find the space to breathe.

*James Gallogly is a Catholic prison chaplain.*

**Loving Lord, I’ve spent my life learning to distinguish between right and wrong, so I’ve learned to judge things and situations – but I’ve also learned how to judge people and the things they say and do. Help me to withhold judgement when it means jumping to the wrong conclusions about them. Amen.**

## Dig for gold

by Sr Siobhán O’Keeffe SSHJM

Deep friendships bring light and joy into my life. However, my heart was sorely anguished when I fell out with my best friend when I was fifteen. A misunderstanding caused a huge rift between us – all my efforts to break the impasse failed. I was at risk of becoming judgemental, frustrated, and increasingly angry. Letters of apology, conversations with third parties and even prayer all seemed futile.

Then I heard that my friend was in hospital. A wise person advised me to visit her. I was reluctant as I feared further rejection and humiliation. My heart pounded as I climbed the hospital steps and prayed all the way to her bedside. Imagine her surprise when she saw me – we spoke of

our discord and embraced in forgiveness. Healing had begun.

Our friendship deepened as we learnt more about the necessity of open communication and forgiveness. We remain friends today.

*Sr Siobhán O’Keeffe is a Sister of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.*

“**May the Lord grant us the wisdom to seek that which is worthwhile and to love, not with our words but with our actions.**

**Pope Francis**

**Today:**  
1 Samuel 26:2-7-9, 12-13, 22-23  
1 Corinthians 15:45-49  
Luke 6:27-38

**Monday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 1:1-10  
Mark 9:14-29

**Tuesday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 2:1-13  
Mark 9:30-37

**Wednesday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 4:12-22  
Mark 9:38-40

**Thursday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 5:1-8  
Mark 9:41-50

**Friday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 6:5-17  
Mark 10:1-12

**Friday (V):**  
St David  
Philippians 3:8-14  
Matthew 5:13-16

**Saturday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 17:1-13  
Mark 10:13-16

**Next Sunday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7  
1 Corinthians 15:54-58  
Luke 6:39-45