

SUNDAY PLUS

Speak to the heart

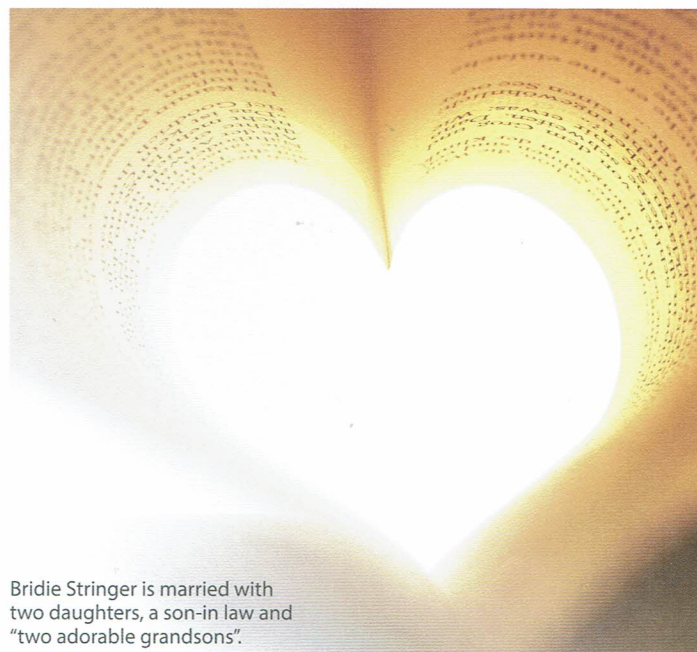
Hearts hear better

by Bridie Stringer

Today's readings are all about lessons and how we learn them.

The powerful story from Acts challenges the perceptions of the multinational crowd about a group of uneducated Galileans. This group of fishermen, plus a tax collector and some other dubious characters have suddenly become fluent in many tongues and clearly have not been on a foreign language course! They have somehow acquired a new way of knowing and a new way of passing on their knowledge. Some of the listeners receive it negatively but others are clearly astonished. The Spirit of Truth has been breathed into these preachers and they are giving out what they have received.

Jesus has, of course, prepared his friends for this moment, telling them that he is "the way, and the truth, and the life" and that the Spirit will teach them what they need to know and will remind them of what they have already been taught by their Lord. The Spirit works in our lives too – not perhaps with the drama of proclaiming in the market square in foreign languages, but sometimes quietly, gently. We are comforted, knowing in our hearts that what we are doing is good work and worthy of our calling as Christ's followers. Perhaps one lesson from today's readings is that our best teachers are sometimes those from whom we least expect to learn. Some will say little, but their lives speak louder than their lips and, in response, our hearts hear better than our ears.



Bridie Stringer is married with two daughters, a son-in law and "two adorable grandsons".

Who is welcomed?

by Cristina Gangemi

I wonder if you can look back over your lives and ministries and ask yourself how many intellectually disabled people you have shared with in your parish? How many people, who live with diverse ways of learning and experiencing the world, have been welcomed or have had access to pastoral care? Who has been "en-abled" and who has been "dis-abled"?

When we think of what it means to be a balanced society and a welcoming parish community it is rare that people who have been disabled are remembered.

A community is often presumed to be made up of people who all have the same way of acting, communicating and

thinking. Certainly our buildings, architecture and resources reflect this but why is this so?

If the Christian community is called to be a place for all to find and know God, why are so many disabled people still missing from our communities; especially as their stories bring the joy of diversity and creativity to the world?

Intellectual disability: caring for yourself and others is co-written by Cristina Gangemi and Dr Liam Waldron and available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

"When the Holy Spirit is present, something always happens. Where blows the Spirit, things are never at a standstill."

Pope Francis

Touch what is deepest

by James Gallogly

The role of the chaplain is very much that of an advocate. We are called to be there when there is no one else. We articulate the case of the lost and the lonely. We walk alongside the outcast, our presence unquestioning.


I feel this advocate too as I walk the wings and make myself present. I am acutely aware that I am not alone: I am not the source of any comfort or wisdom that prevails.

An esteemed colleague once asked a wise Sister why he was made so welcome by those in very difficult circumstances. She pointed out that it might be the result of who was with him!

The Holy Spirit, a gift from our Father, promised by his Son, our

Saviour, is with us if only we would take the time to notice. This presence is in all those around us if we are willing to look closely enough.

James Gallogly is the lay Catholic chaplain at a UK prison.

Holy Spirit, violent wind of God, blow upon us, blow into our hearts and make us breathe forth the tenderness of the Father! Blow upon our world the soothing warmth of peace and the refreshing cool of hope. Come Holy Spirit, change us within and renew the face of the earth  Amen.

Today:
Acts 2:1-11
Romans 8:8-17
John 14:15-16, 23-26

Monday:
Genesis 3:9-15, 20
or Acts 1:12-14
John 19:25-34

Tuesday:
Acts 11:21-26; 13:1-3
Matthew 10:7-13

Wednesday:
2 Corinthians
3:4-11
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday (E&W):
Isaiah 6:1-4, 8
or Hebrews 2:10-18
John 17:1-2, 9, 14-26

Thursday:
2 Corinthians
3:15 - 4:1, 3-6
Matthew 5:20-26

Friday:
2 Corinthians
4:7-15
Matthew 5:27-32

Saturday:
2 Corinthians
5:14-21
Matthew 5:33-37

Next Sunday:
Proverbs 8:22-31
Romans 5:1-5
John 16:12-15