

# SUNDAY PLUS

Reach out in faith

October is the Extraordinary Month of Mission requested by Pope Francis



## Share the good news that God is love



If I'm honest, I can be ashamed of the Gospel. I shy away from telling friends the reason that I can't meet them for brunch on a Sunday morning. Or I overemphasise the social aspect of my annual Lourdes pilgrimage, not sharing how important the time in prayer is for me. So today's challenge from St Paul can make me squirm.

Yet if I reflect on what we mean by "the Gospel" and its constant message of God's love for us, then I should be shouting it from the rooftop!

This month, Pope Francis has called us to reflect in a special way on mission. The emphasis of the Extraordinary Month of Mission, is reaching to some of the remotest parts of the world. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, the Pope has reminded

us that "everyone has a right to hear the Gospel: the good news that God loves them."

How can we ensure that this right is respected? We cannot all leave our homes and travel to remote corners of the world. However, we are still called to be missionaries. To reach out to others and to pray for and support missionaries and the communities where they are serving, is part of our own mission.

At the same time, as a missionary in my own context, I need to not be ashamed of the Gospel in my own daily life, and through my words and actions, share the good news that God is love.

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

Image / Pope Francis greets faithful in St. Peter's Square. neneo / Shutterstock.com

by Stephen Davies

## Young outreach

by Natasha Pritchard

Growing up, my cousins and I had a secret club – The Spy Club – and one of our first tasks was to create our club rules. We began writing, "Rule 1: Be kind. Smile at a stranger and brighten up someone's day". It didn't bother us that such a rule had nothing to do with espionage. We just thought it was a kind thing to do.

Acts of kindness come so naturally to children. These acts of goodness, compassion and love are at the heart of our Christian faith. How quickly we can lose that innocent desire to change the world when we're confronted with the realities of adult life! In today's Gospel, Jesus shows us that a little faith can go a long way.

The same is true of a little love, a little compassion, and perhaps an encouraging little smile towards a stranger.

Natasha Pritchard is a hospital chaplain who also works in youth ministry.

**"The faith we proclaim makes us see God present in all those situations where we think he is absent. He is present in the unwelcomed visitor, often unrecognisable, who walks through our cities and our neighbourhoods, who travels on our buses and knocks on our doors."**

Pope Francis

## Reach the "little ones"

by Gerlinde Symons

At our weekly prison prayer group, I often find myself saying to the men: "Trust in God's timing." Especially for those who are serving long sentences, it's all too easy to lose hope and fall into deep depression. However, as Christians, we are called to be a people of hope, secure in the knowledge that God is with us always and can bring his light to even the darkest of situations.

Our Gospel reading today reminds us that, even if we only have a small amount of faith, God can work powerfully in our lives. In my prison ministry, I have witnessed that when prisoners

choose to open their hearts to God, his love transforms them. It's like watching a rose bud gradually opening when it's given the right amount of gentle rain and warm sunshine – the bud eventually blossoms to reveal its inner beauty!

May your inner beauty shine on those around you, bringing God's light to those who have lost hope.

Gerlinde Symons is a Catholic lay chaplain at two UK prisons.

**Lord my God, give me the faith to see you in everyone I meet. Let me find you in even the most unexpected places ✚ Amen.**

Today:  
Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4  
2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14  
Luke 17:5-10

Monday:  
Jonah 1:1 – 2:1,11  
Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday:  
Jonah 3:1-10  
Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday:  
Jonah 4:1-11  
Luke 11:1-4

Thursday:  
Malachi 3:13-20  
Luke 11:5-13

Friday:  
Joel 1:13-15; 2:1-2  
Luke 11:15-26

Saturday:  
Joel 4:12-21  
Luke 11:27-28

Next Sunday:  
2 Kings 5:14-17  
2 Timothy 2:8-13  
Luke 17:11-19