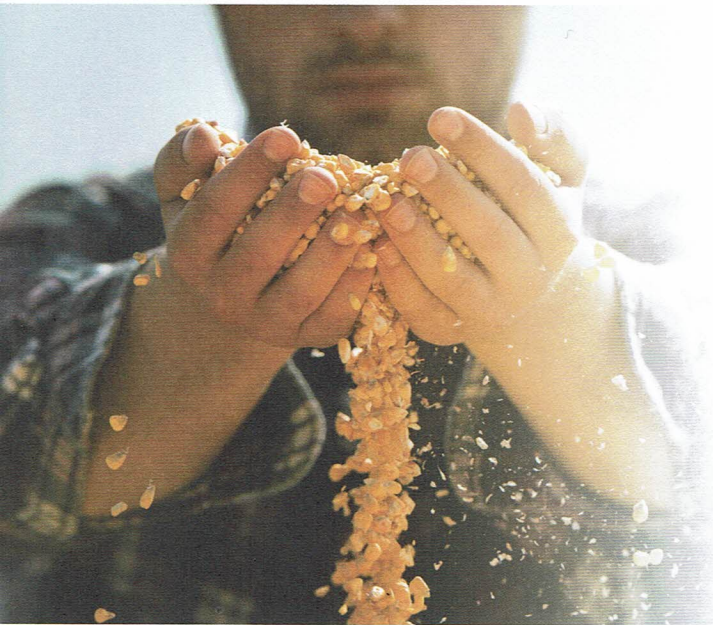


SUNDAY PLUS

Discern and decide

The rich fool



by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

In the story that Jesus tells in today's Gospel a rich farmer is blessed with an abundance of crops. His reaction is not to rejoice with others but to talk to himself until he has worked out a way to store all this abundance and keep it secure. His talk is directed to himself and his touch is limited to what he possesses. His world is reduced to what he owns: his crops, his barns, his grain, his goods. He even thinks that he owns his soul and his own future. His world is confined to himself.

The rich man is dead already. His world is unrelated to the fortune

or fate of any other human being. He decorates his grave with his own possessions which give him a loveless advantage: he thinks that they will insure his future when in fact they will go to anyone but him. When the announcement of his death is made, people can ask the question that was asked of someone else: "Dead? But, how can they tell?" The rich man dies twice: he dies in life and he dies leaving it. His funeral only confirms what has happened a long time ago.

In contrast to the rich fool, Jesus spends himself. He spends his whole life sharing his talent for forgiveness, his insight, his love, his pathos, his energy, his imagination, his prayer, his stories. The list is endless. All these qualities create new life for others. Jesus keeps nothing to himself because he regards nothing as his: he says that everything he is and has comes from the Father. What Jesus owns, he owes.

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

Right choices

by Liam Sheridan

What motivates you? A sense of achievement? Helping colleagues? Getting to clocking-off time? Pay day? The writer of Ecclesiastes observed what we see today – the rat race – and declared it meaningless. When people talk about escaping the rat race they usually mean running away from it. But Jesus is inviting us to something much deeper and more exciting: to participate in his reality, in his kingdom, right where we are. We live in a consumer society and are easily sucked into its mindset, so that we become indistinguishable from those around us. In today's readings, Paul and Jesus spoke against greed, which comes from a failure to consistently discern true reality. Greed calls us afresh each day, so we need to take time daily

to refresh our understanding that we have been raised with Christ, with a "new self" – and decide to "set [our] minds on things that are above."

Liam Sheridan is a lawyer and father of three.

"I am always wary of decisions made hastily. I am always wary of the first decision, that is, the first thing that comes to my mind if I have to make a decision. This is usually the wrong thing. I have to wait and assess, looking deep into myself, taking the necessary time."

Pope Francis

Look to the future: plan wisely

by Rachel Thompson

During exam preparation my advice to classes was, "make a plan and use Pomodoros"*. Using a tomato (pomodoro)-shaped timer to break down working sessions helped pupils avoid stress and focus on the small steps needed for effective revision.

However, as we wait for the results, it's good to think about what really matters and where our treasure lies. Our worth is not in academic success, money or status. God's unconditional love for us is not earned.

It is right that we plan well and make good use of our God-given talents. We might even use Pomodoros. But in the end, nothing is more important than putting the love of God and others at the centre of our lives. Jesus, our ultimate teacher, asks

if we are "rich towards God". Our wisest planning is working out the small steps that we can take today in order to love more generously.

*The Pomodoro technique breaks working sessions down into twenty-five minute slots with a timed five minute break. It takes its name from the tomato (Pomodoro) shaped timer the researcher used when trialling the method.

Whilst working as Redemptorist Publications' Children's Editor, Rachel Thompson is also a secondary school teacher, wife and mum.

Dearest Lord, it's so easy to make the wrong decisions in life. Give me clear vision and right judgement, especially in the tangles that I can't avoid. Amen.

Today:
Ecclesiastes 1:2; 21-23
Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11
Luke 12:13-21

Monday:
Numbers 11:4-15
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday:
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
2 Peter 1:16-19
Luke 9:28-36

Wednesday:
Numbers 13:1-2, 25
– 14:1, 26-29, 34-35
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday:
Numbers 20:1-13
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday:
Deuteronomy 4:32-40
Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday:
2 Corinthians 9:6-10
John 12:24-26

Next Sunday:
Wisdom 18:6-9
Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19
Luke 12:32-48