

# SUNDAY PLUS

Be prepared

## Figuring things out

By Fr Denis McBride  
C.Ss.R.

In the Gospel there is plenty of figuring out to be done. Jesus gives people notice that they must work out for themselves if they are equal to the demands of discipleship. That means that first they have to figure out the cost of discipleship, then consider honestly whether they have the resources to meet that cost.

To drive the point home, Jesus uses twin parables. Anyone intending to build a tower would "first sit down and work out the

cost". If he started without finishing, the sum of his achievement would be a monument to his own folly. Likewise, the king who discovers that his forces are outnumbered would "first sit down and consider" whether the opposing arithmetic is too heavy. If he wants to be a smart survivor, he will practise his speeches on the wonders of peace! In both instances the advice is clear: take the time; sit down; look at the demands; figure out whether you can honestly meet them.

There is a simple, practical realism in Jesus' advice. He doesn't want people rushing headlong into instant commitment while




ignoring the cost and their own capabilities. Discipleship involves having no security other than total commitment to Jesus.

Much of our lives involves figuring out what is within our reach and what we ourselves can realistically achieve. Following Jesus is not a

casual commitment, a weekend enterprise. It is the opposite of the programme, "Married at First Sight". It is a commitment after much figuring out and much thought.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)

Loving Lord, I'm often caught out because I'm not ready in time for whatever is happening. Help me to be ready for whatever you will ask of me. Help me to be prepared for the unexpected.  Amen.

### Prepared for what?

By Katie Knight

"See you on Sunday!" Thus, a fellow student left on Friday afternoons for a Young Christian Students (YCS) event. He'd packed his wallet in one pocket and his toothbrush in another – and that was it! He carried no rucksack and, amazingly, encountered few problems whilst away.

Most women – including myself – believe in being prepared for anything. Even travelling lightly, most would carry two combs, carefully packed in two different

locations. Then there are handkerchiefs, sticking plasters, paracetamol, an extra item of clothing in case of a change in the weather, perhaps a folding umbrella and a carrier bag or equivalent lest there's something extra to carry back... Anthropologists say it's because men are the hunters and need to move quickly whereas women must think of children and homemaking.

It's worth remembering that our packing usually means that we are free to choose what to carry. People caught up in conflict or natural disasters often have no such luxuries. They focus on survival, not comfort.

*Katie Knight, a former midwife, is now looking forward to her eighth great-grandchild.*

Feast of the week  
Thursday 8 September

### Our Lady's birthday

We like birthdays. They let us tell people whom we love that we're glad that they were born. When someone close to us dies, we remember their birthday for the rest of our lives. Let's face it, we also enjoy our own birthdays.

We don't know the date of Our Lady's birthday. It's lost in history. Perhaps she herself didn't know it:

not every culture sees them in the same way as we do. Mary's mother might have told her of the time of year or a local event which coincided with her birth, rather than the year. We don't know.

Mary is special in more ways than one. That's why there's one day every year which we celebrate as her birthday, tell her how much we love her and let her know what a difference she makes to our lives. Whether or not Mary was born on 8 September, we celebrate her because we love her.

*Sr Janet Fearn FMDM*

[Mary] is the Virgin of readiness, Our Lady of Readiness. She is ready right away to come to our aid when we pray to her, when we ask for her help, her protection is in our favour. In many of life's moments when we stand in need of her help, her protection, let us remember that she does not make us wait: she is Our Lady of Readiness, she immediately goes to serve.

Pope Francis

Today:  
Wisdom 9:13-18  
Philemon 9-10, 12-17  
Luke 14:25-33

Monday:  
1 Corinthians 5:1-8  
Luke 6:6-11

Tuesday:  
1 Corinthians 6:1-11  
Luke 6:12-19

Wednesday:  
1 Corinthians 7:25-31  
Luke 6:20-26

Thursday:  
Micah 5:1-4 or  
Romans 8:28-30  
Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Friday:  
1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-27  
Luke 6:39-42

Saturday:  
1 Corinthians 10:14-22  
Luke 6:43-49

Next Sunday:  
Exodus 32:7-11, 13-14  
1 Timothy 1:12-17  
Luke 15:1-32