

SUNDAY PLUS

Little things matter



By Mary Colwell

I watched the elderly man working with great care and admirable patience. It took him most of the morning to drag logs and branches from where scrubby growth had been trimmed back to a secluded clearing in the woodland. With an attitude

of great reverence and humility, he slowly assembled the right sizes and shapes so that the log pile was stable and wouldn't collapse. He laid branches over the top to keep off the rain, and he made sure there were different sized holes at different heights. He could have been building a church, such was his devotion. When he had finished, he stood back, wiped the sweat off his brow with his sleeve and said, "There! That will make a nice home for some small creatures. Everything needs a home." It was a touching, even beautiful moment of connection between a man and the planet; he knew that his wasn't the only life worth caring for, that the small, scurrying, scuttling things deserve our respect, too.

This ageing gentleman wasn't changing the whole world, he wasn't railing against our destruction of nature, he simply served the earth the best way he could. He did a job with respect and love, and he did it very well. Now, one tiny part of the earth is benefiting from his loving service. I will always remember his example of what it means to truly serve, his actions spoke more to me than a thousand worthy words.

Mary Colwell is an award-winning wildlife broadcaster, writer and environmental campaigner.

The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good. Sadly, politics today often takes forms that hinder progress towards a different world.

Pope Francis

Simple and open

By Mary Bell

Children obviously loved Jesus, they crowded round him whenever he appeared. This isn't surprising because children instinctively know if a person is good and kind and likes being with them.

There is no guile in children – they tell it like it is as we sometimes know to our embarrassment when a child makes a loud comment like "Look at that fat man over there". And who doesn't enjoy the Nursery nativity play?

Jesus must have enjoyed their innocence; their simplicity a far cry from the machinations of the Jewish leaders and even the rivalry among his closest followers about who was going to be "the greatest". He will have welcomed their undemanding presence and rightly condemned anyone who would harm them.

Significantly he uses the opportunity to teach an important lesson: we must all become like children to be worthy of heaven – not childish and naïve, but simple and openly speaking the truth as they do.

Following many years in the classroom, retired teacher and Head of RE, Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauties of the natural world around her.

Jesus, help me simplify my life by learning what you want me to be – and becoming that person.  Amen.

St Thérèse of Lisieux

Feast of the week
Tuesday 3 October



St Thérèse of Lisieux
(1873-1897)

"He [Jesus] opened the book of nature before me, and I saw that every flower he has created has a beauty of its own, that the splendour of the rose and the lily's whiteness do not deprive the violet of its scent nor make less ravishing the daisy's charm. I saw that if every little flower wished to be a rose, Nature would lose her spring adornments and the fields would be no longer enamelled with their varied flowers.

So it is in the world of souls, the living garden of the Lord. It pleases him to create great saints, who may be compared with the lilies or the rose, but he has also created little ones, who must be content to be daisies or violets, nestling at his feet to delight his eyes when he should choose to look at them... What delights him is the simplicity of these flowers of the field, and by stooping so low to them, he shows how infinitely great he is. Just as the sun shines equally on the cedar and the little flower, so the Divine Sun shines equally on everyone, great and small!"

St Thérèse of Lisieux

Today:
Ezekiel 18:25-28
Philippians 2:1-11
Matthew 21:28-32

Monday:
Exodus 23:20-23
Matthew 18:1-5, 10

Tuesday:
Zechariah 8:20-23
Luke 9:51-56

Wednesday:
Nehemiah 2:1-8
Luke 9:57-62

Thursday:
Nehemiah 8:1-12
Luke 10:1-12

Friday:
Baruch 1:15-22
Luke 10:13-16

Saturday:
Baruch 4:5-12, 27-29
Luke 10:17-24

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 5:1-7
Philippians 4:6-9
Matthew 21:33-43