

Topsy Turvy Sunday



Kathryn Fleming *reflects on* Philippians 2:5-11

One of the entertaining things about working in a cathedral is the business of getting people lined up for processions. It's all about knowing your place and sticking to it, but the interesting thing, of course, is that in church precedence the further back you find yourself, the more important you probably are. There are often sound practical reasons for this, but it's good theology too, reflecting the gospel order of things. I do sometimes wonder if we should choose one Sunday in the calendar to become "Topsy Turvy Sunday" – but how would we choose? Would it be when Mary sings of a God who has put down the mighty and exalted the humble? Or when the Gospel reminds us that "first shall be last and the last shall be first"? Or perhaps it might be today, the day when we celebrate a king on a donkey, the day when St Paul reminds us of just what Jesus gave up to enter our world. A whole theological tradition, "kenosis", has emerged from this, as writers have marvelled alongside Paul, that Christ "emptied himself", and became obedient to all the laws that bind the created order. In this as in all things, he sets a pattern for us, as we try day by day to triumph over ego and to empty ourselves in total obedience to God. ☺

Loving God, touch us afresh with your transforming Spirit. May Christ's life grow in us. May he become greater as we become less. This we ask in the name of he who, through his death and resurrection, turned the world upside down. Amen.

Leave No One Behind

by Caroline Hodgson

Today is World Autism Awareness Day. It's part of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) initiative, which in turn underpins the UNs seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

The aim of LNOB is to "the unequivocal commitment of all UN member states to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole".

It's ambitious stuff, although it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone who's involved in an active faith community. You could – individually or with a group, turn the subject of Leave No One Behind into a focus for discussion, prayer – and, of course, action. How do you think we're doing, globally? How are we meeting the challenge nationally? How about your community? In the workplace? In church? Where you live? Among family and friends? And what about in your heart and actions?

<https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind> ☺

“Renounce yourself in order to follow Christ; discipline your body; do not pamper yourself; but love fasting.”

St Benedict (480-547)

A Lenten Camino

Part 7 – there when she was needed

by Sr Janet Fearn

We know little about Mary Salome, wife of Zebedee, mother of James and John. She stood at the foot of the cross and watched Jesus die. She helped prepare his body for burial and was one of those who, on Easter morning, wondered who would move the stone from the tomb opening. Perhaps she had supported bereaved mothers and wives, but how does anybody find the words to console a mother whose son has been tortured and killed? How does one offer support when one's own heart is breaking? The knowledge of a common, shared grief makes the

difference – Mary Salome stayed with Jesus' mother, regardless of how inadequate she may have felt.

The Church of Maria Salome in Compostela is probably the only church in the world dedicated to this heroic woman, remembered because of her son James, whose mighty basilica is nearby. She deserves to be remembered in her own right, but that wasn't her way. She was there when she was needed and that's all that mattered.

Can I, like Mary Salome, be there for someone who is hurting?

Sr Janet's book, *A Lenten Camino*, is available from *Redemptorist Publications* as an e-book: www.rpbooks.co.uk/-a-lenten-camino ☺