

Family time

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Luke 14:1. 7-14

The actor Martin Sheen is not reticent in speaking about his guiding faith, and he admits that the balance between stardom and humility has not always been easy. He tells a story from the time when he was filming *Gandhi* in India in 1981. After he made a donation to Mother Teresa's charitable work, the director Richard Attenborough invited Sheen and some of the other cast members to travel from Mumbai to Calcutta to meet Mother Teresa. Sheen was greatly excited at the prospect and, when he got back to his hotel, he told his son, the actor Emilio Estevez. In response, Emilio simply asked his father: "But why do you want to meet her?" Sheen replied: "This is Mother Teresa, a living saint, there's only one in the world, we have a great opportunity here..." Emilio simply repeated his question: "But why do you want to meet her?" Becoming indignant, Sheen spluttered: "So I can tell everybody..."

Suddenly realising what he'd said, he stopped in his tracks, and later cancelled the visit to spend more time with his son.

Martin Sheen did meet Mother Teresa years later. It would of course have been an honour for anyone to have met her. But thanks to his son, Sheen realised that there are simpler honours that matter more, such as spending time with one's family. It's not known whether Mother Teresa ever heard this story, but doubtless she would have approved. ☺



Martin Sheen with his sons Emilio Estevez, Ramón Estevez and Charlie Sheen

Lord God, teach us to be humble, seating ourselves low down the table and exalting and honouring all your children – the great and the good, and the poor and the humble. Amen.

Books of the Old Testament

Malachi

by Georgina Byrne

Georgina Byrne concludes our book-by-book series about the Old Testament.

What is the final message of the Old Testament? Malachi reminds us that the worship of God should be wholehearted, not half-hearted. Haggai and Zechariah presented optimistic visions of rebuilding the Temple, whereas Malachi reveals that religious observance has grown lax. Nothing is particularly bad, but the prophet is dismayed that religion has lost its spirit, its

heart. The priests and the people have stopped caring about God and the covenant. Malachi challenges them to do better: to offer the best sacrifice to God, rather than what will suffice; to give the best tithe; to remember the teachings of Moses and to look for Elijah. Most importantly, Malachi returns to the covenant. "I have loved you, says the Lord" (1:2), "Return to me, and I will return to you" (3:7). God has been faithful and waits for the people's faithful commitment.

The message is timeless: our God is faithful, so give to God your whole heart and your best worship. ☺

Make the most of the summer

Continual rest – a gift from God

by Heather Smith

How many different meanings of "rest" can you think of? Dictionaries list quite a few, and the Bible is full of references. This single English word is translated from several Greek and Hebrew words, each with their own nuance and used in a different contexts. The most familiar is surely the one in the creation story in Genesis – God rests on the seventh day. This is

the reason for the sabbath. You'll often hear it used as a reason for punctuating our working week with sufficient down time, and also for taking longer breaks during the year.

Hebrews 4 talks about entering God's rest as something we enjoy constantly, however we spend our days. Keeping that rested feeling after time off is not easy, but it's what God wants for us. Fresh from our holidays, we could work with God to keep resting all year round. ☺

“ ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Revelation 1:8