

# SUNDAY PLUS

Lord, help me!

## Don't give up!

by Sr Thérèse Garman SMP

In today's Gospel, Jesus uncharacteristically ignores the Canaanite woman's desperate plea for help. But she refuses to be rebuffed, penetrates his silence and disparagement of her people and challenges him. Her persistence is rewarded by Jesus granting her request and praising her faith.

Jesus' mission was first to Israel and he begins from this position of exclusivity, but ends by breaking out of it. The woman cleverly extends Jesus' parable: the dogs don't have to wait for the children to finish before getting something to eat. So Jesus can help a Gentile without detracting from his mission to Israel. This reply results in Jesus changing his mind. By her faith she has crossed the boundary and Jesus also ventures over and cures

her daughter. This incident changes the direction of Jesus' mission.

We too need to be persistent in our requests to him and seek ways of sharing his mission now: "Go, make disciples of all nations." We must let this woman confront and question us. She believes that everyone may eat and be satisfied, that even the crumbs and leftovers might nourish the world. She continues to pester us today. She comes to us in the widows of Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan; in the people of our own country relegated to the margins of society; and in the suffering people we meet in daily life.

The challenge is, how do we respond? What will we say to the next "Canaanite" woman or man who comes along, desperate for Jesus' help?

*Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence.*



## More about Landings

by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ

Have you thought yet of someone who might come back to faith this autumn?

Landings offers a safe place to explore. For listening and being heard, asking the big questions, for plugging back in. Groups are not about the "saved" welcoming "sinners", pressurising others to return, blind to the hurt the Church may have caused. Rather those who have "returned" tell their stories and show solidarity and support.

**Lord, when I am so much in need that I cannot think of the words to say, listen to me and help me. Amen.**

One Landings returner said recently: "I was a lapsed Catholic for twelve years. I felt a spiritual calling but wasn't sure returning to the Catholic Church was right. Landings was vital in confirming my decision to return to the Catholic faith."

There are many more in our midst. All it might take is a word of encouragement – or you might like to start a group in your parish.

For more information, contact Helen Carvalhido-Gilbert at [landingsuk@gmail.com](mailto:landingsuk@gmail.com) or Fr Dominic Robinson SJ at [dominicrobinson@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:dominicrobinson@rcdow.org.uk)

*Fr Dominic Robinson SJ teaches dogmatic and pastoral theology at Heythrop College, University of London.*

## In desperate times

by Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

"The train due to arrive on platform five has been delayed for at least one hour due to a signals failure." Unfortunately, I was heading towards the funeral of a dearly loved friend and had no "wriggle room" in the timing.

A station staff member transferred me to an express service run by a different train company. His kindness allowed me to attend my friend's funeral.

"Help!" Many a complete stranger has responded above and beyond the call of duty to a desperate cry for help. Our real heroes and heroines react because they see a need and

recognise that there is something they can do. They are frequently embarrassed by any effort to say thank you. Yet what might be a small deed in their own eyes has transformed the life of another person.

In desperate times, we all need our unforgettable unsung heroes and heroines. May God bless them for their goodness and their presence in our life.

*Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.*

**“When we pray, we are asking: ‘Jesus, help me. Jesus, give me strength. Solve this problem. Forgive me!’ To pray in this way is okay, but at the same time one must not forget to also say: ‘Jesus, pray for me; show the Father your wounds, which are also mine; they are the wounds of my sin; they are the wounds of my problem at this time.’**

Pope Francis

Today:  
Isaiah 56:1, 6-7  
Romans 11:13-15, 29-32  
Matthew 15:21-28

Monday:  
Judges 2:11-19  
Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday:  
Judges 6:11-24  
Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday:  
Judges 9:6-15  
Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday:  
Apocalypse 21:9-14  
John 1:15-51

Friday:  
Ruth 1:1, 3-6, 14-16, 22  
Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday:  
Ruth 2:1-3, 8-11; 4:13-17  
Matthew 23:1-12

Next Sunday:  
Isaiah 22:19-23  
Romans 11:33-36  
Matthew 16:13-20