

# SUNDAY PLUS

Little and loved

## Living lessons



by Mary Colwell

**T**his spring I watched two wood pigeons rear their chicks. Their nest was in the top of a tree, but as I live on a hill and the tree was below me, I got a good view of their private lives. They were gentle parents who took turns to incubate and then feed the squabs. Nothing ever seemed hurried. There was no dashing to and fro: their lives were the epitome of calm attentiveness. Sometimes the adult birds would sit together by the nest and preen, putting their heads together as though exchanging affections. Occasionally, both adults would disappear for what seemed like hours, leaving the nest exposed and vulnerable (and me a little anxious). Nothing ever went wrong though and I feel sure they

were just out of sight, keeping an eye on their nest. Watching these pigeons turned into a daily prayer of quiet observance. I pondered on the watchfulness of God played out in nature. I drew from them the meaning of God's care and provision, no matter how big or small, important or inconsequential. I contemplated on the times when God seems absent, but is in fact just out of sight and always watching. Many people only see wood pigeons as agricultural pests, and farmers shoot thousands each year to protect their crops. To others they are big and cumbersome; making an alarming noise when they burst out of a tree with a loud clatter. But to me, they are living lessons on the love of God, no matter who we are.

*Mary Colwell is a radio, TV and internet producer, specialising in themes of wildlife conservation and natural history.*

## The least, the last and the lost

by Jo Siedlecka

Today's Gospel passage is so reassuring, especially when times are difficult. The first words of St John Paul II's pontificate were: "Do not be afraid!" How much time we waste worrying when we are really not on our own! God sees every detail – every little sparrow. Every hair on my head has been counted. God understands

all my worries and concerns, including those problems I haven't told anyone else and those which people have not heard when I have tried to share my concerns. God accompanies me at every moment of my life's journey. Help me to sense God's presence always and to resist those fearful thoughts. At the same time, this reading challenges me to listen attentively to God's words; to try to use my time well and be mindful of the needs of others – those near me and those far away – in my actions, my words and my prayers.

*Jo Siedlecka is a Catholic journalist and runs the Independent Catholic News website, [www.indcatholicnews.com](http://www.indcatholicnews.com)*

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**Jesus is the companion on the journey who gives us what we ask; the Father who cares for us and loves us; and the Holy Spirit, who is the gift, is that 'more' that the Father gives, for which our conscience does not dare to hope.**

Pope Francis

## Call for compassion

by Liam Sheridan

Albert Einstein wrote that we should "widen our circle of compassion". It is easy to feel compassion for those we love, or know about – but also all too easy to close our ears to the cries of those who are not like us, or are far away. Jeremiah, writing six hundred years before the arrival of Jesus Christ on earth, understood that God was a compassionate being who rescues the life of the needy – often through the good work of

his servants. As New Testament believers, we have a new and fuller revelation of God's compassion to us. That compassion led God to give us what Paul calls the gift of grace. Being compassionate does not mean that we can fix all someone's problems – but we can share in the suffering of others and thus show them love. Is God calling you to widen your circle of compassion today?

*Liam Sheridan is a lawyer and father of three.*

**I know I'm only little,  
I know I'm only small,  
but I know God loves little ones  
the very best of all.**

**And so I'm glad I'm little  
and very glad I'm small,  
'cos then I know I'm loved by him  
whom I love best of all.**

Sr Janet Fearn FMDM



**Today:**  
Jeremiah 20:10-13  
Romans 5:12-15  
Matthew 10:26-33

**Monday:**  
Genesis 12:1-9  
Matthew 7:1-5

**Tuesday:**  
Genesis 13:2, 5-18  
Matthew 7:6, 12-14

**Wednesday:**  
Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18  
Matthew 7:15-20

**Thursday:**  
Acts 12:1-11  
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18  
Matthew 16:13-19

**Friday:**  
Genesis 17:1, 9-10, 15-22  
Matthew 8:1-4

**Saturday:**  
Genesis 18:1-15  
Matthew 8:5-17

**Next Sunday:**  
2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16  
Romans 6:3-4, 8-11  
Matthew 10:37-42