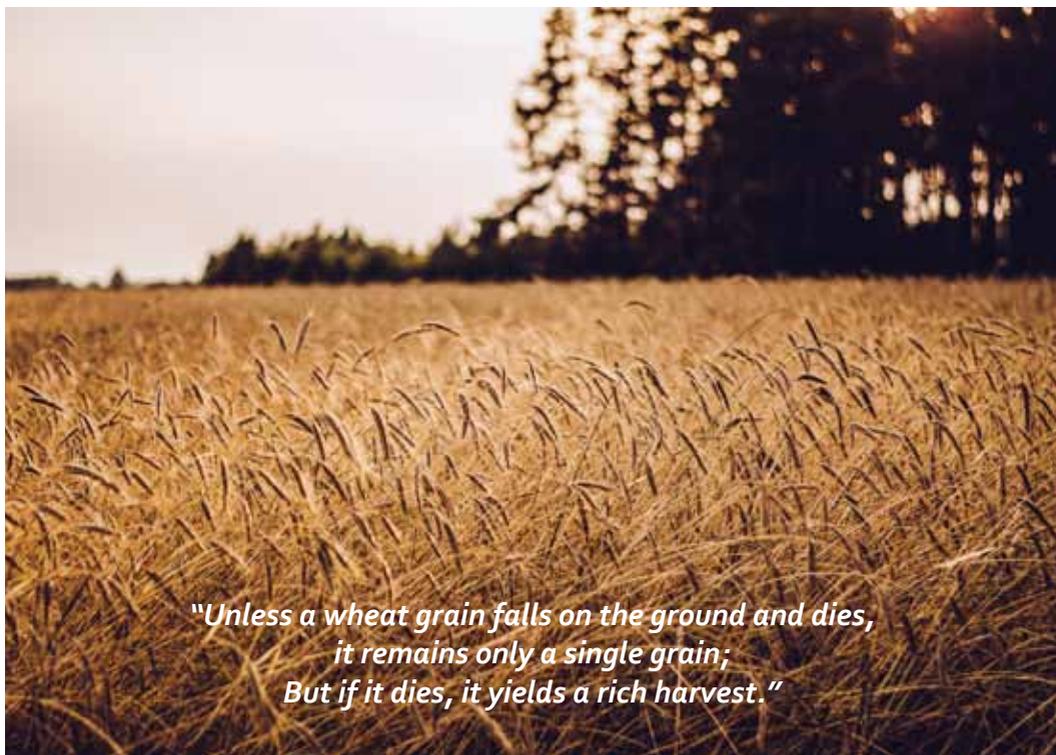


FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT 2018



*"Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies,
it remains only a single grain;
But if it dies, it yields a rich harvest."*

FROM THE READINGS

Jeremiah 31:31-34

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks –
when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel ...
Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it in their hearts.
Then I will be their God and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 5:7-9

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications
with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he

was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

John 12:23 – 25

'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; But if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life.



REFLECTIONS

God wants to give us new hearts. God's loving ways will be planted in the depths of our beings. This will be possible if, like Jesus, we can be like seeds that 'die'. It will happen to our hearts – an inner 'dying', a 'letting go', a way of the cross, that makes a way within, and leads to new life.

Become an expert

in the art of discovering the good In every person. No one is entirely bad.

Become an expert

in the art of finding the truthful core in views of every kind.

From 'Become an Expert' by Dom Helder Camara in Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings, 101

How poor you will remain until you discover

that you do not see best

with open eyes.

How naïve you will remain until you learn

that when your lips are closed, there are silences richer than torrents of words.

How clumsy you will remain until you understand

that joined hands can do far more than restless hands

which may inflict

the unintended wound.

Dom Helder Camara in Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings, 134

FROM POPE FRANCIS

By following Jesus along the Way of the Cross, we have once again realised the importance of imitating him through the fourteen works of mercy ... feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visit the sick and those in prison, and burying the dead. Freely we have received, so freely let us give.

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 18

After the corporal works of mercy come the spiritual works: counselling the doubtful, instructing the ignorant, admonishing sinners, consoling the afflicted, pardoning offences, bearing wrongs patiently, praying for the living and the dead. In welcoming the outcasts who suffer physically and in welcoming sinners who suffer spiritually, our credibility as Christians is at stake. Not in ideas, but in our actions.

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 19

At times in our lives, we aim lower rather than higher. At those times, it is good to realise that God remains faithful, even obstinate, in his love for us. The fact is, he loves us even more than we love ourselves. He believes in us even more than we believe in ourselves. He is always 'cheering us on'; he is our biggest fan. He is there for us, waiting with patience and hope ...

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 33

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

From your reading: What stands out or 'speaks' most to you?

Translate to life: This week, what is Jesus calling you to do and to be?

Express the heart:

Find words or an image for

- Insights gained from these readings and reflections
- A hope or intention for the future.

ONE HOUR FOR A GROUP

- **Begin with a short prayer**, asking God's presence and guidance.
- **Time with the Text:** Allow quiet time for reading and reflecting. ~15 mins
- **Discussion:**
 1. Each person shares a key insight from their reading and reflection. 10 mins
 2. General Discussion. 30 mins
- **Concluding Prayer Together**
eg. 'Prayer' from this leaflet, a traditional prayer, or your own words.

PRAYER

**To my brothers and sisters in developing countries
and to my God:**

While I was deciding which oat bran cereal to eat this morning,
you were searching the ground for leftover grains from the passing truck.

While I was jogging,
you were working in the wealthy landowner's field under a scorching sun.

While I complained about the poor service in the gourmet restaurant,
you were gratefully eating a bowl of rice.

While I poured my 'fresh and better' detergent into the washing machine,
you stood in the river with your bundle of clothes.

While I watched the evening news on my wide-screen television set,
you were being terrorised and taunted by a dictatorial government.

While I read the newspaper and drank my cup of steaming coffee,
you walked the long, dusty miles to a crowded schoolroom to learn how to read.

While I scanned the ads for a bargain on an extra piece of clothing,
**you woke up and put on the same shirt and pants that
you have worn for many months.**

While I built a fourteen-room house for the three of us,
your family found shelter in a one-room hut.

My brothers and sisters, and my God,

forgive me for my arrogance and my indifference.

Forgive me for my greed of always wanting newer, bigger, and better things.

Forgive me for not doing my part to change the unjust systems
that keep you suffering and impoverished.

I offer you my promise to become more aware of your situation and to change
my lifestyle as I work for the transformation of the world. Amen.

Adapted from 'Apology to My Brothers and Sisters' by Joyce Rupp in Out of the Ordinary, 88



Prepared by: Adult Faith Education Sandhurst PO Box 201 Bendigo Vic 3552. E: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au **Acknowledgements:** Joyce Rupp, *Out of the Ordinary*, Notre Dame Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2010; Francis McDonagh, *Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings*, Marynoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009; Bishop Brendan Leahy (Ed), *Dear Young Friends: Pope Francis in Conversation With Young People*, Mulgrave, Vic: Garratt Publishing, 2017.