

SUNDAY PLUS



Yeast rising

A Year of the Word

If we are the yeast...

by Claire Wright

Muriel Rukeyser's quote: "the universe is made of stories, not atoms" always rings true. We are storytellers, passing down wisdom and tales from generation to generation. Jesus was a storyteller. In fact, we hear in today's Gospel that "he would never speak to them except in parables".

So I'm always surprised by how short the parable of the yeast is. A woman makes leavened bread – and it's like the kingdom of heaven? But perhaps there is beauty in the brevity. It allows for interpretation, for chewing over. My favourite explanation is about

how the leavening of the bread is an explanation of how we, as Christians, are to help bring about the kingdom of heaven on Earth.

If we are the yeast, then we are to shape and form the culture. We are to be in the world but not of the world, becoming the rising agent that lives out the Gospel to lift those around us to God. Without yeast, bread lacks texture, lightness, shape. Without us as Christians, the glory of God dims in the culture around us.

I call that a pretty good loaf of bread, don't you?

Claire Wright is a Brighton-based freelance writer who runs a faith blog and a healthy family food website, all while taking care of two lively toddlers.



Mighty oaks...

by Mary Bell

Every success story has to have a beginning and it is very often something small.

One of my favourites is that of the founding of Amnesty International. Peter Benenson's initial realisation that all over the world there were people in prison without trial merely for their beliefs, languishing forgotten, without hope, led to the simple expedient of sending letters and cards to these people thereby raising the awareness of the authorities to the fact that their plight was known

further afield. As a result hundreds of prisoners of conscience have been released over the years.

Rosa Parks, a black woman in Montgomery, Alabama, refused to give up her seat on the bus when there were no empty seats for white people. The resulting bus-boycott helped to trigger the movement which eventually resulted in greater justice for black people in America.

From such small and unpromising beginnings mighty political forces have been mobilised to bring about a better life for many.

Mary Bell is a retired teacher, USA lecturer and devoted grandmother.

"When there were no refrigerators, to preserve the *mother dough* of the bread, they gave a small amount of their own leavened dough to a neighbour, and when they needed to make bread again they received a handful of leavened dough from that woman or from another who had received it in her turn. It is reciprocity."

Pope Francis

Unseen growth

by Gerlinde Symons

In our Gospel reading today, Jesus invites us to look at ordinary, everyday life making bread – and see the presence of God beneath the surface. He encourages us to look for the Kingdom of God in the most unexpected places and teaches us that the sacred can be found in everyday life.

In my work as a prison chaplain I have found that the Kingdom of God is alive and active. The media today would have us believe that prisons are full of bad people but it is my experience that many men and women in prison have had a genuine change of heart and mind. They develop a deep desire to follow Jesus, who was in complete solidarity with the outcasts of society, always challenging people's preconceptions of where goodness can be found.

The Kingdom of God can be revealed in our daily struggles. Rather than wanting to change a painful situation, we can let it change us by allowing God to heal us and draw us closer.

Gerlinde Symons is a Catholic lay prison chaplain at two UK prisons.

Lord, it's not easy to make good bread: so many things can go wrong with it that, when it comes out of the oven, it can be inedible. Sometimes I just don't have the patience to wait for results and yet, if the baker doesn't wait for the dough to rise, the bread is a disaster. Give me patience. Teach me understanding. Help me to share what I have with others.
✚ Amen.

Christian Playfulness

Peter Morris

10% off for Sunday Plus readers!

Go online www.rpbooks.co.uk or call us **01420 88222** with discount code **Plus**



Fr Peter uses a combination of personal testimony, and the inspiration of generations of men and women of faith, to show why he believes playfulness and a good sense of humour are not only allowable, but are vital for a spiritual life that is alive, fulfilling and inspiring for others.

Today:
Wisdom 12:13. 16-19
Romans 8:26-27
Matthew 13:24-43

Monday:
Micah 6:1-4. 6-8
Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday:
Micah 7:14-15. 18-20
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:
Song of Songs 3:1-4
John 20:1-2. 11-18

Thursday:
Jeremiah 2:1-3. 7-8. 12-13
Matthew 13:10-17

Friday:
Jeremiah 3:14-17
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:
2 Corinthians 4:7-15
Matthew 20:20-28

Next Sunday:
1 Kings 3:5. 7-12
Romans 8:28-30
Matthew 13:44-52