

world have an advantage here. They cannot ever take those things for granted, for amidst each day's struggle to survive it is hard to forget our utter dependence on God and others.

DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER

Jesus is the only person who could have been without those needs. Before his hands were nailed to the cross they moulded our earth, "flung stars into space" and "knitted us in our mother's womb". He didn't need anyone's help, yet he chose to put himself in a situation of total vulnerability. He allowed people to do whatever they wanted with him. And when they did, and his awful suffering began, he allowed others to help – Simon of Cyrene shouldering his cross, Veronica wiping his bloody face, his mother being there in his sight as he looked down during three hours of agony. The only one who isn't dependent shows us that we are. All of us are dependent on each other. All of us are dependent on God, even for our very lives. Each of us is unable to get out of our bed in the morning, never mind carry out an act of charity, by ourselves. Each of us has nothing whatsoever of our own to give.

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Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTI-PHON
Save us, O Lord our God!
And gather us from the nations,
to give thanks to your holy name,
and make it our glory to praise you.

FIRST READING Deuteronomy 18:15-20

PSALM Psalm 94

RESPONSE **O that today you would listen to his voice!**
Harden not your hearts.

1. Come, ring out our joy to the Lord; hail the rock who saves us. Let us come before him, giving thanks, with songs let us hail the Lord. **R.**

2. Come in; let us kneel and bend low; let us kneel before the God who made us for he is our God and we the people who belong to his pasture, the flock that is led by his hand. **R.**

3. O that today you would listen to his voice! "Harden not your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah in the desert when your fathers put me to the test; when they tried me, though they saw my work." **R.**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 7:32-35

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Allleluia, alleluia!
Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children.
Allleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 1:21-28

COMMUNION ANTI-PHON

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.

Next Sunday's Readings:
 Job 7:1-4, 6-7
 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
 Mark 1:29-39



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SUNDAY BULLETIN

A NEW COMMANDMENT

"I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another" (John 13:34). Jesus told his friends at the Last Supper. Thus he explained the need for his followers to imitate him. Of course, we know now what the disciples didn't know that night – that the very next day Jesus was to be crucified out of love for them, and out of love for you and me. Earlier in the evening it had been horrifying enough for them to learn that following him meant washing people's feet and – even worse – allowing other people to wash theirs. But now we discover a whole new, terrible kind of love to be imitated: the sort that gives up its life for its friends – the sort that even gives up its life for its enemies.

To call oneself a Christian is a brave thing to do. And it is also a very stupid thing to do if we think that, with our own strength, we can honour that commandment of Jesus. That way seems to lead us without exception – certainly in my own experience – to abject failure and humiliation. And any sincere Christian journey can only continue in the painfully repeated, ever-growing realisation that in everything we are utterly reliant on God's grace and mercy. And in that there is a happy paradox: each failure when trying to be a good Christian – each failure when trying to practise charity – is an opportunity for growth, a chance to make progress and a new insight into who we are and who God is. Each time when God picks us up and hugs us, we will know even better how much our Father loves us.

Our brokenness is a blessing. That is why we are at such great risk when our identity becomes all about being the giver: the fixer of other people's problems, the person with all the answers, the indestructible, self-sufficient one. This risk is especially great in the West, where it is written deep into us that we are potential bestowers of gifts. We look at the poor people of the world and their need is glaringly obvious. But it can take some digging to recognise that we, too, have deep needs. Perhaps we have an experience of all our basic needs being always met... but we certainly need them to be met! We tend to remember that only when, all of a sudden, things we have taken for granted are taken from us – our income, our food, our medicine. Perhaps, in one sense, the poorest people in the



We continue this of articles adapt his new book by Macfarlane-Barrow founder of Mar

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4TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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