

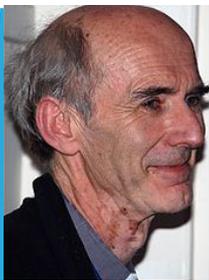
Life to the Full:

Living faith within our families



Monthly newsletter for parents: **September 2017**

Handing Over



This month, our parent newsletter is written by Fr Digby Samuels. Fr Digby was ordained 41 years ago. He was a parish priest in the Docklands,

East London, for 14 years. He has ministered in many other parishes, led retreats on Guided Prayer and, at present, lives in a Care Home run by Little Sisters of the Poor, in North London.

Here, he reflects on the Sunday Gospel for the week-ending 3 September 2017:

"If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him take up his cross and follow me." Matthew 16:21-27

If there was an app on our 'phone or gadget in our house that measured anxiety levels it's likely that for many of us the beginning of the school year would register as 'over the top'. How can we find a moment to look at and read this Gospel let alone get relaxed enough to reflect and pray? Take heart, then, that God understands family life and is right there with you in what feels like a whirlwind of activity.

When you finally can carve out a few moments of stillness, it's likely that into your mind will emerge a

whole range of hopes and fears surrounding different members of the family. Let the Jesus of this Gospel be the one with whom you share these feelings and thoughts.

When Jesus talks to his friends about the suffering he will go through out of love for them, but continues by saying that his death will be followed by new life and even glory when he comes again, he wants you and I to know that there's nothing we go through that's beyond the range of his love and healing.

Like Peter, though, we can get stuck in a 'worldly' way of thinking that prevents us from trusting him and believing that he can make a difference.

For example, we might find ourselves really anxious about how one of the children will get on with a new class teacher; or we might worry about how we're going to juggle the school run with the working hours we now have; perhaps over the summer we've realised that making ends meet this coming school year looks impossible; or there might be bereavement or serious illness in the family.

Whatever we're facing can be handed over to Jesus in faith. He will show us how we can "take up our cross and follow him", but at the same time He will give us a sense that we're no longer going it alone,

relying only on human resources, but now he, the Lord himself, is right there with us. This partnership makes all the difference.

The God of love has, in Jesus Christ, joined himself to us in a deep solidarity so that the whole range of our human experiences - the everyday, the most joyful, the most sorrowful and tragic - are faced with a new hopefulness. As we hand everyone and everything over to God in this way, even the new school year seems to have new possibilities.

Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the blessings of our family life.

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Thank you that in pondering your Gospel we can begin to see how you are alongside us in our family with all its joys and sorrows. As we begin this new school year, I hand over to you all the happiness, longings and sufferings that we and others bear.

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I place all my faith in you and in your redeeming love. May I be open to all the new hopes this year contains and so live in the power of your Holy Spirit.

We make our prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen