

Gabriel's hand as we approached a steeper part of the path. "Let's just be careful on this bit," I cautioned. But it was me who slipped next. My standing foot slithered on the ice and, as I began to lose my balance, I tried to let go of Gabriel's hand so that I didn't pull him over. But he held surprisingly firm and I just managed to stay on my feet. We both laughed. "If anyone was watching us now, they would think it was me helping you down the hill, but I am not so sure!" I said. "Well, Dad, it is just that we are both helping each other," Gabriel said as if to reassure me. And almost immediately I slithered once more and again a strong little hand kept me from falling. "But I am helping you a lot more than you are helping me!" he gurgled through an explosion of laughter.



AN IMPORTANT LESSON

I feel like I have learnt quite a lot about charity in many faraway places such as the slums of Haiti, the arid lands of Northern Kenya and the highlands of Madagascar, but that lesson taught me by my youngest son, and a slippery pair of old boots, on the hill behind my own house in Scotland, feels as important as any of them.

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Mass text



SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! A great prophet has appeared among us; God has visited his people. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Mark 1:40-45

COMMUNION ANTIIPHON

God so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son, so that all who believe in him may not perish, but may have eternal life.

ENTRANCE ANTIIPHON

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me.

For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

FIRST READING Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

PSALM Psalm 31

RESPONSE You are my refuge, O Lord; you fill me with the joy of salvation.

1. Happy the man whose offence is forgiven, whose sin is remitted. O happy the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no guile. R.

2. But now I have acknowledged my sins; my guilt I did not hide. I said, "I will confess my offence to the Lord." And you, Lord, have forgiven the guilt of my sin. R.

3. Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord, exult, you just O come, ring out your joy, all you upright of heart. R.

Next Sunday's Readings:

Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15



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SUNDAY BULLETIN

CHARITY AND THE SLIPPERY SLOPE

As someone who is described as "the founder" of a charity, and who has on several occasions had to cringe while receiving awards for a work that was only ever meant to be one little effort to help some people, I believe it is very helpful, when trying to live a life of charity, not to take ourselves too seriously. Charity and joy should be the best of friends – especially if we want to point people to Jesus as we carry out our work. I think we put so many people off with our long faces and pious sentimentality. Knowing that I can be guilty of that too, I choose to end this little series of articles on charity by recounting the following incident, which helped me think again about the danger of seeing ourselves only as givers but not receivers of help (for many of us, being seen to receive is much harder than being seen to give).

Towards the end of a midwinter afternoon I went for a walk with my seven-year-old son, Gabriel. The snow down in our glen had melted disappointingly quickly and both of us felt drawn to the deep white drifts high on the hill behind our house. As we climbed up a path that I have walked with my own father a thousand times, we spooked a herd of hungry deer on their way down looking for night-time grass in the lower fields. Even though we hadn't planned to go so far, we soon found ourselves on top of the hill, one thousand feet above our house, which we could just about make out amid the trees – or at least the smoke drifting from its chimney. The lights of our village were now twinkling along the river, above which a mist was starting to rise. Gabriel managed to spot his school on the other side, and the village hall and then the train station – in fact a train, too, chugging out towards Oban, crossing the bridge where the river flowed into Loch Awe. Above it the dramatic peaks of Cruachan, which towered much higher than our hill, were catching some big black clouds as they rolled in towards us from the Atlantic. "We'd better get going before it gets dark," I said.



The temperature was plummeting and the snow was freezing hard again now. Almost immediately on starting our journey down we both lost our footing and fell, laughing, into the snow. I held

Charity

and the

of living

generous



Magnus Macfarlane-Barrow, founder of Mary's Mea concludes this series of articles about charity from his new book

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6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK