

Poured into our hearts

Jo Jones *reflects on* Romans 5:1-5

I recently read the memoir of a Japanese prisoner of war. He told of their terrible treatment by the guards. He wrote of how when people lost hope, they died. The same stories come from survivors of the Nazi concentration camps. This of course does not mean that hope will keep us alive. Rather, hope will keep our spirit alive to face whatever comes and not be defeated by it. In times of immense difficulty, we need to create the space to remember that God is with us, through the Spirit, in our deepest being, where we are.

The theology of the Trinity has spawned vast numbers of books,

yet Paul explains its reality for us in today's five verses. We have peace with God; through Jesus and through the Holy Spirit we experience God's love "poured into our hearts" (Romans 5:5). The three entwine together, each joining us with the other. When we understand this, through all the difficulties in life, we are able to keep hope, for God is – quite uniquely – with us.

Paul goes on to remind us to be humble, for Christ died for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). It reminds us to take care about being judgemental: despite our unworthiness, we have been given the greatest gift possible. 🍷



Lord, thank you for the gift of your incredible love that lives within us, giving us strength to face all things. We pray that you will bring new hope to your world, that all may know they are deeply loved. Amen.

Finding God in Ordinary Time

Part II – take a plain piece of paper...

by Caroline Hodgson

One of our greatest challenges is to stop thinking of "ordinary" time as wasted time. So here's an exercise in thinking and praying about what's "ordinary" in our lives. First, set aside at least half an hour – and stick to it. Then take a piece of paper – the bigger the better – and a bold pen, and start compiling a list of activities you find "ordinary". You can work as a group, but

each person should create their individual list. You might include washing up, commuting to work, visiting an elderly relative. Be honest (but sensitive) and resist the temptation to get into big discussions at this stage. Every time you find yourself faltering, take a minute to pray – this is a wonderful exercise in achieving clarity through prayer. Keep the list visible during the week, and every time you find yourself doing something "ordinary", add it to the list. 🍷

World Day against Child Labour

by Caroline Hodgson

Around 218 million of the world's children work, many full time. Many do not attend school, do not receive proper nutrition or care, and have little or no time to play. They are denied the chance to be children. Over half of them work in the worst conditions, such as hazardous environments, slavery, drug trafficking, prostitution or armed conflict.

The International Labour Organization launched the

World Day against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the issue and look at ways of eliminating child labour.

Giving every child the chance to be a child has implications that go far beyond the health well-being of the individual child, important though this is. It matters for the whole of humankind and the planet. The Bible tells us not only to treasure and nurture children, who are "a heritage from the Lord", but also that children are our role models: "whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it". 🍷

“The eternal Son became a child so that I might become a child again and so re-enter with him into the kingdom of the Father.”

Henri Nouwen (1932-1996), Dutch Roman Catholic priest, writer and theologian