

# SUNDAY *Plus*

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Divine Office Week IV** Year A**Racial Justice Day**

## A martyr for justice

By 2004, she had lived in Brazil for nearly four decades, helping small farmers in the Amazon to resist the encroachments of wealthy landowners and working to safeguard the rainforests against slash and burn agriculture. She had earned a reputation over the years as a fearless and determined advocate and had recently been recognised with a couple of humanitarian awards. But it was her first time on Brazilian national television.

Dorothy Stang, aged seventy-three, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame of Namur, arrived at the TV studio

to participate in a televised panel discussion about deforestation in the Amazon and the oppression of peasant farmers. She showed up wearing a shirt that had the slogan "Death of the forest is death of us all" stencilled on it... "I have lived in the Amazon for twenty years," she said. "I know who has land documents that are forged and those that are real... and the forgers outweigh the legitimate ones." Then she reached into the cloth bag she always carried, and read out a long list of the offending ranchers as well as the crooked cops

they had in their pockets...

Less than a year later, Sr Dorothy was dead, shot down on the orders of furious ranchers who feared her advocacy of both the farmers they sought to dispossess and the rain forest they hoped to exploit... "I know they want to kill me," she wrote a friend, "but I will not go away. My place is here alongside these people who are constantly humiliated by others who consider themselves powerful."

*Kerry S. Walters*, Profiles in Christian Courage: extraordinary inspiration for everyday life


We have to know how to listen - not to judge, not to shut doors as if we hold all the truth and no one else has anything to offer. From this posture of humility will come greater clarity about where the Lord is calling us.

Pope Leo

### Setting an example

Venerable Satoko Kitahara (1929-1958) was a Japanese convert who was told of a group of children who picked through garbage to earn a living. Shocked at their situation, the young aristocrat invited some of them to come to her parents' home occasionally for piano lessons and tutoring. Before long, Satoko realised that this... wasn't enough. "I had thought I was a great Christian because I condescended to dole out some free time, helping children with their homework!... It hit me now. There was only one way to help those ragpicker children: become a ragpicker like them!" So she did, eventually leaving her comfortable home to live among the poorest of the poor... she just listened to the tug of her conscience telling her that to love, she had to live among those she loved. She died at twenty-eight, the hero of a community she had served merely by being present to them.

*Meg Hunter-Kilmer, Aletheia*

Lord of life, may I be a messenger of hope.  Amen.



*Saints*

### St Thomas: seeing for oneself

By Sr Thérèse Garman OLP

In chapter 11 of St John's Gospel, Thomas is steadfastly committed to following Jesus, even to dying with him. So he was both courageous and honest: "Lord, we don't know where you are going." After the resurrection, the other disciples tell Thomas that they have seen the Lord, but earlier they, too, doubted. When Jesus appears to Thomas, he gently offers him what he wants and Thomas is the first in the Gospels to confess Jesus as God. From confession of doubt, comes a deep faith, which transforms Thomas' life. On our own spiritual journey, our faith gets shaken, we question it, wondering why Jesus does not appear to us when everyone around seems to have seen him. But this shows we are taking our relationship with God seriously. Thomas was not really a doubter; he needed belief based on Jesus' personal revelation to him. May we, like Thomas, experience the presence of our risen Lord for ourselves. Thomas' personal encounter resulted in faith and strength to take the good news to so many.

*Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence and a treasured former member of the Redemptorist Publications editorial team*

### READINGS

**Today:**  
Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13  
1 Corinthians 1:26-31  
Matthew 5:1-12

**Monday:**  
Malachi 3:1-4  
Hebrews 2:14-18  
Luke 2:22-40

**Tuesday:**  
2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14, 24-25, 30 - 19:3  
Mark 5:21-43

**Wednesday:**  
2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17  
Mark 6:1-6

**Thursday:**  
1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12  
Mark 6:7-13

**Friday:**  
Ecclesiasticus 47:2-13  
Mark 6:14-29

**Saturday:**  
1 Kings 3:4-13  
Mark 6:30-34

**Next Sunday:**  
Isaiah 58:7-10  
1 Corinthians 2:1-5  
Matthew 5:13-16