

## 27A

*Old Bill lay dying and his wife Mary was in the kitchen up to her eyes in baking cakes one of which was Bill's favourite. The tantalising aroma from the cake quickly circulated into the dying man's room and wafted its way into his nostrils. For old time's sake Mary, can you give me a slice or two of my favourite mouth-watering cake? 'For God's sake' she yelled 'will you keep quiet, that's for your wake'.*

You know, many tears **shed at a graveside** are often those of lost opportunities – good deeds left undone or kind words left unsaid towards the deceased. So, **'don't keep the cake for the wake or the flowers for the funeral'**.

We are not meant to be spectators on life's drama but part of the action. 'This life is not a dress rehearsal but the real thing'. Listen to these words of wisdom from a poem I came across recently: "I shall pass this way but once; any good that I can do or any kindness I can show to any human being; let me do it now. Let me not dither nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

**The Gospel today** is about God offering his chosen people, during the course of their history, umpteen opportunities to grab at the chances to live better lives, most of which they ignored. By and large the message of the prophets was given short shrift too. The first reading emphasises this. God says to His people: **"what more could I have done for my people that I have not done"**. They say 'eaten bread is soon forgotten'. They had forgotten all that the Lord did for them. When Jesus himself came on to the scene they closed their hearts to him too. Parts of their story could easily intertwine with our story.

**God offers everyone opportunities** to grow into the person He wants them to be. How many moments do we turn down in our day to day lives to help us become more loving

Christ-like people. This same theme is touched on in the second reading when St Paul says: 'fill your minds with everything that is noble, good, true, virtuous and pure. What do we fill our minds with each day? Most of us if we're not fretting about the past we're worrying about the future but if we live in the present, we'll be less likely to miss chances for living more virtuous lives.

**Sin**, more than anything else, could be described as lost opportunities to become a better more Christ-like person. The Greek translation of the word 'sin' literally means '**missing the mark**'. 'Sin' is wasting valuable time - passing up chances to grow in virtue. Sin likes to lurk in the shadows and cause us to dodge the challenges which God puts in our path to help us grow more Christ-like.

St Paul, in his letter, urges the Ephesians not 'to live aimless lives like the pagans'. Like it or loath it, the often grating train announcement '**see it, say it, sorted**' refers to any suspicious activity we may notice whilst travelling. That could be our rule-of-thumb as well when it comes to all things spiritual.