

Dressed for the occasion



Julia McGuinness *reflects on* Galatians 3:23-end

When I got married, I had two bridesmaids. Their dresses were of identical light aqua colour and design, yet it was amazing how distinctive my two friends looked on my wedding day. Different in height, shape, colouring and facial features, each girl made her dress her own, but as fully fledged and beautiful bridesmaids, they both played an equal part in the celebrations.

Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that through baptism, they are clothed in Christ by faith – enfolded in his forgiveness and grace, in righteousness and standing before God, as they grow to reflect his character ever more richly.

Christ's clothing brings the same blessings of belonging and status within God's family for all. Paul insists that there is no pecking order within the body of Christ, whatever distinctiveness we bring into the kingdom. As is often said, the ground at the foot of the cross is level.

Christians come in all shapes and sizes, and even as we are dressed in Christ, our defining colour, gender, class or race show through his garments. But just as my bridesmaids were equally part of my wedding day because of their friendship with me, so Christians ultimately belong in God's family through their relationship with Christ. 🍷

Lord, thank you that your family is not mass-produced or a monochrome set of humanity, but a rich diversity of people, individually created and personally redeemed. Help us to reflect your delight in our differences even as we rejoice together in our shared membership of your kingdom. Amen.

Imitating the master *An insight for Fathers' Day*

by David Wells

There is something about having children that makes you self-conscious. Being watched closely chewing, snoring, washing, or waking up to a little face three centimetres from your own is challenging. You are being observed, spied upon, and copied almost all the time, especially when you are least aware of it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ". John too, in his first letter, stressed that believers "ought to walk just as he walked". Copying Jesus was not seen as hypocritical

or lacking originality – it was an act of courage.

When I behave as I imagine Jesus would have, I am not doing it to appear something I am not, but to learn from and be changed by the experience. In imitating him I can become slowly and, with a little failure along the way, the very virtue I practise. There are lots of people who will helpfully tell you about virtue – the ones who really make an impact practise it.

David Wells' books, The Reluctant Disciple and The Grateful Disciple, are available from Redemptorist Publications. 🍷

“Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”

Matthew 6:8

Finding God in Ordinary Time

Part III – express yourself!

by Caroline Hodgson

Take your list of "ordinary" activities (the chances are you see them as chores), and choose five on which to focus. Then take a fresh piece of paper for each, and write the title at the top. Draw a horizontal line halfway across and, in the top half, jot words or sentences connected with it. Don't worry about neatness – but do express yourself clearly! For example, Emma headed a sheet

of paper "WASHING UP", then wrote huge letters underneath: "I DO 90%!!!" This isn't about making life-changing decisions at this stage, so much as taking a good look at how you structure day-to-day life, and your attitude to the things you devote so much time to. Spend at least ten minutes thinking and praying about each activity. Again, keep it going during the week, taking time to pray that God guides you in making a real change in your life. 🍷