

SoulSpace

SERIES: GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

Season colour: **GREEN**

In this series, **Jim Deeds** finds evidence of the divine in the ordinary and extraordinary events of every day.



THE KITTENS' CRY

A kitten's cry rang out across the Falls Park one early spring morning. The air was clear. The sun was shining. The day had a calmness to it that the previous stormy days had not. It felt good... until this cry disturbed my comfortable walk with the dogs. I couldn't see the cat. But I knew it must have been nearby. I went looking. The cat continued to cry. The cry had a melancholy nature; at once, a cry for help, but with an air of resignation, its cries would fall on deaf ears. It punched me in the gut. I knew I wouldn't be able to go home until I knew the cat was ok.

So I searched. I moved towards the noise, then realised it came from above my head. The cat was up a tree. I looked from tree to tree, following the noise. And there they were! Two kittens; little ginger ones, about 20 feet up a tree sitting at the point where a thick branch shot out from the trunk.

They looked to be only weeks old and were skinny and distressed. I called out to them, but they seemed to have no intention of coming down. I went to the park attendants' office and explained the situation. The attendant seemed slightly perplexed but told me he would be up to the kittens in 15 minutes. As we talked, another dog walker came along and told us the kittens had been up that tree for a couple of days now. He said people had phoned the local authorities and animal welfare organisations but to no avail. This increased my resolve to ensure a positive outcome for these wee creatures.

When I arrived back at the tree, three women (always the women) were taking matters into their own hands. They had a bowl of cat food and two blankets. They worked over the next half hour to coax the kittens down. I encouraged them in what little way I could. Eventually, one kitten, then the other, carefully backed down the tree trunk with amazing skill and style. They landed on the earth to the waiting hugs and cuddles of the women who had already arranged warm, loving homes for them.

Seeing the kittens wrapped up and safe, we all felt a warm glow and had a smile on our faces. The day looked a little brighter. The sky looked a little bluer. The air a little cleaner. We had made a difference.

I walked on after a few minutes of congratulatory conversation. And as I walked, I reflected on this experience. I was struck by how I was moved to act based on the first hearing of the kittens' cry. It reached my ears, I let it touch my heart, and I acted. The heroes of this encounter were the women. But I was moved to my heart and soul by the plight of these homeless kittens.

CRY OF THE WORLD'S POOR

Then something else struck me. While it was right and proper that I was moved in this way by the cries of these kittens, I am not always moved into action by the cries of people – poor people, vulnerable people, people who cannot fend for themselves.

What is it in the cry of these little kittens that so moved me when I walk past homeless people every day and do not always feel moved in the same way? And when I am moved to my heart by the cry of the poor, I am not always moved to action to accompany my moved heart. What is it in the sight of a thin little kitten up a tree that galvanised the band of us to act so selflessly, when I can watch each night the effects of war and injustice on humans beings all over the world and then simply change the channel? It seems that sometimes we are more easily moved by cuddly kittens than by human suffering.

Of course, we are not incapable of being moved in our hearts and of being moved to action. Jesus heard the cry of the poor. He listened to their cry and responded to it. Let us choose to allow ourselves to hear the poor's cry and do what we can to alleviate the suffering we see. ■



Today's readings

Dan 12:1-3

Heb 10:11-14.18

Mk 13:24-32

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Jesus talks about a time in the future when a series of terrifying phenomena will occur. These events will signal the end of the world, as people have understood it. They will also signal the return of the Son of Man in glory and the final establishment of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is talking about himself and his glorious return as Messiah.

The plight of a couple of stranded kittens provokes a reflection on the plight of humanity's poor.

