

# At a crossroads

Julian Smith *reflects on* Matthew 20:20-28

**T**oday we are at the crossroads where two ways meet.

The first way is that of Jesus, outlined in today's Gospel. The mother of James and John asks Jesus if they can have first dibs at seats in glory. The other disciples are angry, so Jesus spells out the facts of life in living his way. Conventional certainties are stood on their head and greatness comes through serving others. "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve," and the same is true for all who follow his way.

The second is the Way of St James, the Camino de Santiago. On this weekend each year tens of thousands of people gather in Santiago de Compostela, the burial place of St James, to celebrate Spain's patron saint. Many of them walk the Camino to get there, following one of the "ways" that spider-web across the map of Europe. In doing so they experience a different way of living, a fellowship of mutual support and encouragement. On the Camino de Santiago walkers begin to experience the way of Jesus.

Always we are called to live at another crossroads, the crossroads where the way of Jesus meets the way of the world. The world can be hostile and unforgiving, yet we are called to a way of life that brings the light of Christ into the darkness of hearts and lives – the way of service. ☺



**Jesus, you call us not to be served but to serve; walk with us on our journey of faith. Give us grace to support and encourage our fellow pilgrims as we follow your way in a harsh and unforgiving world. Amen.**

## Making Ordinary Time anything but

by Caroline Hodgson

To round off this exercise in thinking about the "ordinary" side of life, think of Ordinary Time as a drink of water, and a feast day as a glass of wine. Jesus said: "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me," and he also turned water

into wine. a glass of wine might be a real pleasure – but we all know the dangers of over-indulging, and it's no substitute for a long, life-giving drink of water.

We can't live in a permanent state of festivity, or it becomes deeply unhealthy. Ordinary Time makes up most of our lives, so let's find cause to celebrate and thank God for it. Let's also resolve that nothing we do will ever be dull or flat, and keep searching for ways to make every single second as extra-ordinary and remarkable as Christmas, Easter and birthday rolled into one, enlivened by the intoxicating fizz of the Holy Spirit. ☺

## International Tiger Day

by Lisa Tulfer

Thursday is International Tiger Day. The day was instituted in 2010 at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit where, with tiger numbers below four thousand globally, governments of tiger-populated countries committed to doubling that figure by 2020. This didn't happen.

There are two main threats to tiger populations. One is

poaching for the illegal trade in body parts. Used in traditional medicine and luxury home décor, this is a multi-billion dollar international trade which involves organised crime. The other is habitat loss – tigers are now restricted to just seven per cent of their historic range across Asia, and populations are down over ninety-five per cent since the start of the twentieth century. There are now more tigers in captivity in the USA than living in the wild worldwide.

The largest of the big cats, and with stripes as individually unique as fingerprints, the tiger is an icon of our responsibilities as stewards of God's creation. ☺

“Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 2:5