

SUNDAY PLUS

Just ask

Face-to-face with the Lord



by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

A recent survey by Cancer Research UK concluded that young people would rather use social media or talk online to people they do not know than have a face-to-face conversation with family and friends. The survey found that those aged eighteen to twenty-four are around twenty times more likely to never speak to their neighbours, than are those aged fifty-five and over. The charity said that while social media can be helpful in building up contacts,

studies show that young adults with high social media usage can feel more socially isolated than those who use it less.

In today's Gospel we see another way of distracting yourself from relating to a person. Martha is not on social media, of course, but she uses her pots and pans and utensils in the same way – to avoid a face-to-face encounter with her guest, Jesus. On the other hand, Mary, her sister, sits at the feet of Jesus, adopting the position of the disciple in order to listen attentively to the Lord. Jesus defends Mary's choice, which seems odd in a culture where women could not be taught the Law by the rabbis because they could neither be a teacher nor a disciple.

We learn best about people by relating to them face-to-face, listening to them, and responding in our own way. This means we have to devote time to this simple enterprise; thus we gain in confidence in relating to others. It is the same with the Lord: we should follow Mary and quietly sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to his voice. Forget the kitchen and social media for a little while.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk.

Be simple: ask

by Daniel Kearney

Walk into most bookshops and you will find shelf upon shelf dedicated to the phenomena of so called, "Self-help" books. Their appeal is worryingly widespread. Their subjects cover every conceivable facet of our lives and what, invariably, can go wrong with them during the natural course of our existence. Their rationale is strikingly simple: you can sort out your own problems and concerns (after reading this book) but their method is fundamentally flawed – their presumption that we alone can solve everything. Such thinking takes us away from the very essence of our humanity, which is fulfilled, expressed, and lived fully with one another in community.

Self-help books can isolate us and our problems, encouraging us to look inwards when we might be better looking outwards. They can prevent us from expressing a basic human need of asking others for help. A problem shared is, as we say, a problem halved.

Daniel Kearney is the author of *Adult Bullying and Childhood Bullying: caring for yourself and others*, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

"Love is always at the service of others. Because love is seen in actions, not words."

Pope Francis

Ask the right question

by Dr Lucy Russell

It has been interesting going back into the classroom having spent time at home with the boys following ten years in an academic Educational Studies Department. There is much that I am valuing, but there have also been changes in classroom practice in the past twenty years. Data is now a driving factor! Having spent the first two weeks of the new academic year concentrating on getting my feet under the table and on the teaching and learning, a text arrived on my day off about controlled assessments and data analysis. I had no idea what the answer was. Data and appraisal were on my induction

to-do list. Slightly daunted by this aspect of the job, I replied with a question. "Please could you help me with this?" The answer: "Don't let these things worry you. We'll sort this out together." Sometimes all that is needed is that we ask the right question.

Dr Lucy Russell's book, *Who do you say you are?* is available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

Lord, sometimes I find it hard to ask for help when I need it and yet Martha was able to do just that. Did Mary get up and help her? I don't know. Lord, but please help me even when I don't get around to asking you ☩ Amen.

Today:
Genesis 18:1-10
Colossians 1:24-28
Luke 10:38-42

Monday:
Song of Songs 3:1-4 or
2 Corinthians 5:14-17
John 20:1-2, 11-18

Tuesday:
Exodus 14:21 – 15:1
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:
Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15
Matthew 13:1-9

Thursday:
2 Corinthians 4:7-15
Matthew 20:20-28

Friday:
Exodus 20:1-17
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:
Exodus 24:3-8
Matthew 13:24-30

Next Sunday:
Genesis 18:20-32
Colossians 2:12-14
Luke 11:1-13