

SUNDAY PLUS

Love always

by Paul Higginson

We all sometimes struggle with the “big questions of life”. Why are we here? Does life have a purpose? What does it all mean? Every bookshop has a section filled with self-help titles. Google “How to be happy” and there are two hundred million results!

In today’s Gospel Jesus tells us that the answer to such questions is a simple one. He reminds us that religion is not primarily about a set of specific beliefs, doctrines or theological positions. It is about what we do, and specifically how we love. Jesus knew at this point (the Last Supper), that his time on earth would soon come to an end. He is clear and direct with his disciples: “I give you a new commandment: love

one another.” Here is the answer to all our questions in just three words.

He then follows this up with the crucial and life-changing: “as I have loved you.”

Jesus is saying that if we can understand how much we are loved by God, then we can discover the freedom and confidence to love one another – not just our family and close friends, but also our “enemies” and those who “persecute” us. The transformative power of love changes lives; God’s love for us sets us free to love others. This revelation was to change for ever the lives of the disciples – and accepting God’s love can do the same for us too, if we have ears to listen and an open heart.

Paul Higginson is the Assistant Principal at the Catholic Sixth Form College in Harrow and has been a parish catechist for thirty years.

Love actively



Lord of my life, be the Lord of my love  Amen.

When times are tough

by Mary Bell

When our children were small my friend Sheila and I had an arrangement that if one of us was in trouble the other, if possible, would go to the rescue straight away. This worked particularly when one of our vehicles gave up the ghost on the school run. Hence, she towed me home on one occasion with her washing line and I rushed to the petrol station when she had filled up her car and discovered she had left

her purse at home. This pact persisted throughout the years of ferrying numerous children to various schools, scouts, guides, dance classes, piano lessons, etc. Our commuting husbands were unavailable so we had to fall back on our own resources which we did to our mutual benefit for many years.

There is nothing to compare with a friend on whom you can rely utterly. She was God’s gift to me and I was God’s gift to her.

Mary Bell is a grandmother and a retired teacher who continues to use her skills in the University of the Third Age.

Hold on to love

by Frances Molloy

She watches the two people, listening and taking in all that is going on around her. If only she could express what’s in her mind! Her grandparents understand; the moment her father arrives to collect her she recognises his voice and crawls towards him. Unable yet to call him “Daddy”, she reaches up to him as he bends down to lift her up – an experience to which many will relate.

What might it be like for the person with dementia, or indeed for anyone with a similar unspoken longing? Experiences of pastoral ministry in care homes have taught that through the power of the Holy Spirit residents who might often be agitated and unresponsive, become more fully alive. They, and the lay visiting teams, share the sense of belonging, which can only be fully met in God. God who lifts us up and holds us close and, together, we call him our Father.

Frances Molloy is the Project Manager of the Pastoral Care Project of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk

“Are there moments when you place yourself quietly in the Lord’s presence, when you calmly spend time with him, when you bask in his gaze? Do you let his fire inflame your heart? Unless you let him warm you more and more with his love and tenderness, you will not catch fire.”

Pope Francis

Today: Acts 14:21-27 Apocalypse 21:1-5 John 13:31-35	Monday: Acts 14:5-18 John 14:21-26	Tuesday: Acts 14:19-28 John 14:27-31	Wednesday: Acts 15:1-6 John 15:1-8	Thursday: Acts 15:17-21 John 15:9-11	Friday: Acts 15:22-31 John 15:12-17	Saturday: Acts 16:1-10 John 15:18-21	Next Sunday: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29 Apocalypse 21:10-14, 22-29 John 14:23-29
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