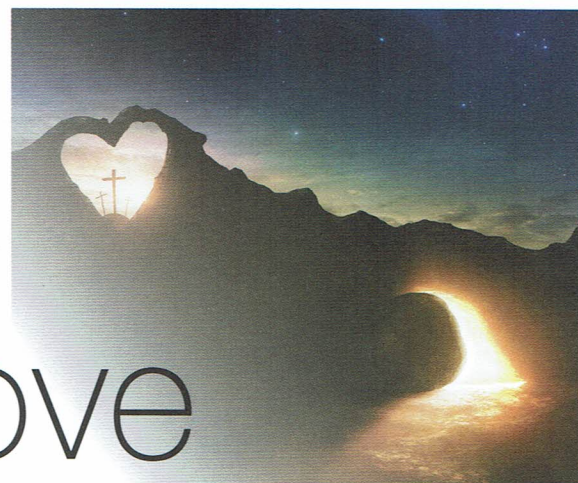


SUNDAY PLUS

“Feed my lambs”

The figure of authority and the figure of love



by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

In the Fourth Gospel there is an interesting tension between two of Jesus’ disciples: the unnamed Beloved Disciple and Peter. The Beloved Disciple appears for the first time at the Last Supper when he is reclining next to Jesus. Peter is not next to Jesus and asks the Beloved Disciple to ask Jesus about the identity of the betrayer. At the high priest’s palace, Peter stays outside the door; the Beloved Disciple goes in and speaks to the doorkeeper who recognises that he is a disciple – she asks Peter: “Aren’t you

another of that man’s disciples?” Peter denies his own identity as a disciple, whereas the Beloved Disciple does not. At the cross Peter is absent but the Beloved Disciple is present and is given as son to Jesus’ mother, making Jesus the Beloved Disciple’s brother.

On Easter Sunday Peter and the Beloved Disciple run together to the tomb. The Beloved Disciple arrives first and waits for Peter, the figure of authority, to catch up, letting him go into the tomb first. When Peter enters he sees linen cloths lying on the ground. When the Beloved Disciple enters the tomb he sees and believes. Love sees in the dark.

When the risen Lord appears to the group it is the Beloved Disciple who identifies him, explaining to Peter: “It is the Lord.” After breakfast Jesus questions Peter: “Do you love me more than these others do?” If Peter loved Jesus more than the others, he would be the Beloved Disciple: then the figure of authority would be the figure of love. The Beloved Disciple is not questioned; it is he who enshrines Jesus’ great command: “I give you a new commandment: love one another.”

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

Feed the children

by Dr Lucy Russell

When my god-daughter and her family moved to Scotland, I went to a fashionable children’s stationery shop and bought her a ridiculously priced scrapbook with a lock on it and some puffy paint with which to personalise it. She was utterly delighted, but it was far from her best parting gift. Very movingly, her mother thanked our parish priest, and me as a catechist, for helping her to give her daughter the most precious gift of all: her faith. Huge numbers of children and young people are experiencing emotional and mental health problems. Given all that we read in the news about the mental health of our young people, a good grounding in what

really matters is so important. Our beliefs help us through the hard times. Resilience, the ability to cope with life and being able to maintain your sense of who you are: this is what our children need and what their faith can give them.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of *Who do you say you are?*, available from Redemptorist Publications: www.rpbooks.co.uk

“Our worship becomes pleasing to God when we devote ourselves to living generously, and allow God’s gift, granted in prayer, to be shown in our concern for our brothers and sisters.”

Pope Francis

Feed my faith

by Mary Bell


Have you ever met somebody out of context and failed to recognise them? It is a common enough occurrence and happens all the time with teachers and former pupils.

Who is the elegant, sophisticated young woman saying “Open wide. This won’t hurt a bit”? Or the assured young gentleman ushering you into an office at the bank where you’ve gone to negotiate an extension to your overdraft? Or that policeman who looks rather familiar...? Surely it can’t be the individual last seen reluctantly slouching into school.

Sometimes we may be tempted to despair at the behaviour and

tastes of the younger generation but it is necessary to have faith in the future: to suspend our judgmental attitudes and accept the reassuring evidence of our own eyes; remembering that sometimes it is the most unlikely people who end up with the top jobs. With Peter, Jesus, of course, shows us the way.

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

Loving Lord, give me the courage and generosity to put other people’s needs before my own  Amen.

Today:
Acts 5:27-32, 40-41
Apocalypse 5:11-14
John 21:1-19

Monday:
Acts 6:8-15
John 6:22-29

Tuesday:
Acts 7:51 – 8:1
John 6:30-35

Wednesday:
Acts 8:1-8
John 6:35-40

Thursday:
Acts 8:26-40
John 6:44-51

Friday:
Acts 9:1-20
John 6:52-59

Saturday:
Acts 9:31-42
John 6:60-69

Next Sunday:
Acts 13:14, 43-52
Apocalypse 7:9, 14-17
John 10:27-30