

SUNDAY PLUS

Welcome!

A Year of the Word



“Who do you say I am?”

by Paul Higginson

In today's Gospel, Jesus says to the disciples, “Who do you say I am?” It's a question that Jesus also puts to each of us. How will we answer? Who is Jesus for you? Is

he a distant historical figure who said some nice things but has little relevance to your life and the world of today? Is he a philosophical dreamer who asks you to “turn the other cheek” or “give all you have to the poor” – high-minded ideas that are impossible to put into

practice? Is he just another good man, a holy man, to be studied and admired perhaps? Is he someone of whom to be slightly fearful – someone who will one day judge us, and perhaps find us wanting? Or someone you consider on a Sunday, but to whom you rarely give a thought for the rest of the week? At some point all of us have to honestly answer this question. For Peter, Jesus was the Son of Man, God in human form, the Word made flesh. It was this acceptance that led Peter to become a disciple

of Jesus, to forge a friendship with him that would enable him to live a life of real meaning – “to live life to the full”. The question that Jesus posed was an invitation to enter into a life of love – loving God and all those he created. This is what is on offer to us today from the living God, who asks us to ponder anew that same question – “Who do you say I am?”

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

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

by Anne M Walsh

Yesterday we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, today often also known as Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

In 1866, Pope Pius IX entrusted the Redemptorists with the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and gave them a mission to “make her known.”

All over the world, people come before this wondrous icon, in joy and sorrow, in hope and fear, in sickness and in need. We come to see Mary and her Son – and also to be seen by them.

Mary does indeed see us, encountering us in the realities of our lives but loving us too much to leave us where we are. With a mother's love, she calls us to more.

She challenges us to gaze on our broken world with her eyes of love and compassion and to reach out to those who most need her perpetual help today.

Anne M Walsh is the Director of Partnership in Mission of the Redemptorist Conference of North America.

Lord, to be honest, I really don't welcome every person and every opportunity you offer me. I'm pretty good at finding excuses to avoid some of them. Yet you welcome everyone, regardless of their identity and circumstances. Help me to be more welcoming. Help me to be like you. 🙏 Amen.

A little bit lost

by Rachel Thompson

We've known for decades that global warming threatens our existence, but it was a lone teenager who mobilised people around the world to take action. Greta Thunberg spoke more clearly than the scientific research. People, more than ideas, are what make a difference.

It was the person of Jesus who changed the disciples. Jesus himself isn't really interested in the ideas people have about him: he wants to know if the disciples really know him; “Who do you say I am?” Much as I love thinking about and discussing theological ideas, they aren't what matters. Ideas about Jesus are not the same as knowing Jesus.

Today I am challenged to make time to welcome Jesus and to

allow him to meet me in the heart of who I am. Recognising Jesus will, I believe, be what enables us to also recognise how we might take action to make a difference in the world.

Whilst working as Redemptorist Publications' Children's Editor, Rachel Thompson is also a secondary school teacher, wife and mum.

“If we look at our neighbours without mercy, we cannot understand their suffering and difficulties. And if we look at our neighbours without mercy, we also run the risk of God looking at us without mercy. Today, I see only a great desire for friendship and help.”

Pope Francis

Today:
Acts 12:1-11
2 Timothy 4:6-8, 17-18
Matthew 16:13-19

Monday:
Amos 2:6-10, 13-16
Matthew 8:18-22

Tuesday:
Amos 3:1-8; 4:11-12
Matthew 8:23-27

Wednesday:
Amos 5:14-15, 21-24
Matthew 8:28-34

Thursday:
Amos 7:10-17
Matthew 9:1-8

Friday:
Ephesians 2:19-22
John 20:24-29

Saturday:
Amos 9:11-15
Matthew 9:14-17

Next Sunday:
Zechariah 9:9-10
Romans 8:9, 11-13
Matthew 11:25-30