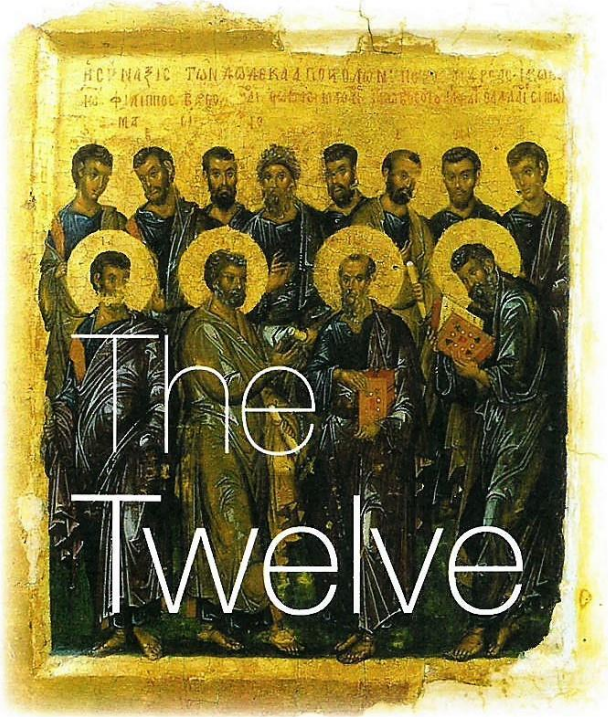


SUNDAY PLUS

Compassion where it's needed



By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

When Matthew writes his Gospel, he displays no interest in the biographical details of the apostles. The same is true of the other evangelists. The twelve apostles, the first members of the Christian family, appear in the Gospels as little more than a list of names. Apart from Judas, the only four who stand out among the Twelve are the two sets of brothers, Peter and Andrew, James and John.

Although each Gospel states that Jesus chose twelve apostles from among the larger group of disciples, we know little about them as individuals. There is even some variation in the four lists of their names. Perhaps the evangelists were deliberately avoiding what we would call "personality

cults'. Remember Paul chiding the Corinthians: "What could be more unspiritual than your slogans, 'I am for Paul' and 'I am for Apollos'"

The apostles were chosen by Jesus to be his accredited witnesses. Their experience of Jesus who walked the roads of Palestine was unique in the history of the Church; but they were important as apostles in the measure that they pointed others to the person of Jesus. This might explain why, although they were revered in the early Church, there was no organised nostalgia about their time.

The Church moves on in the life of faith: each community of believers must give birth to its own apostles. The apostles of every age must be as self-effacing as the apostles of the first age: they must point others to the living Lord.

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

Loving Lord, sometimes you touch my heart in the most unexpected ways. Teach me to be compassionate. May my hands and words be yours. Work through me. Make me an instrument of your love. 🕊 Amen.

Hold on to God's promise

By John Wright

There is an invitation in our readings this Sunday and it is this: "hold fast to my covenant". Life is ever-changing. Within the torrent of news, both good and bad, within the chaos of work and family life, within the noise of the city, it is difficult to find a moment to catch our breath. It is no wonder Jesus describes the crowds he sees as "harassed and dejected". It was as true then as it is today. But if we consider the invitation to hold on to God's promise, then it can provide the chink of light that allows us to see the hope on the

horizon. Amidst an ever-changing world, God's love remains the same. This promise of eternal love can be the anchor that steadies the ship of our day to day lives. In the midst of darkness, we must dare hold on to God's promise.

John Wright is a primary school teacher with a keen interest in theology. He lives in Brighton with his wonderful family.

By giving of ourselves to our brothers and sisters, we serve the right master: God.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Saturday 24 June

The Nativity of St John the Baptist

What did the neighbours think? According to the Gospels, an elderly couple, Elizabeth and Zechariah, became first-time parents long after Elizabeth had abandoned hope of motherhood. Zechariah's once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem had left him unable to speak. Perhaps he told the surprised people of Ain Karem in writing that he had seen an angel, but many would not have believed him and would only have gossiped all the more as Elizabeth's pregnancy became increasingly obvious. The Gospels tell us that, when John was born, everybody expected him to be named after his father. However, his parents insisted: the baby would be called John.

The name John (and its female equivalent) has three common translations as "Gift of God", "Grace of God" and "Beloved of God". The cousin of Jesus would, in his lifetime, prove the accuracy of all three.

Sr Janet Fearns FMDM

Today:
Exodus 19:2-6
Romans 5:6-11
Matthew 9:36 - 10:8

Monday:
2 Corinthians 6:1-10
Matthew 5:38-42

Tuesday:
2 Corinthians 8:1-9
Matthew 5:43-48

Wednesday:
2 Corinthians 9:6-11
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Thursday:
2 Corinthians 11:1-11
Matthew 6:7-15

Friday:
2 Corinthians 11:18, 21-30
Matthew 6:19-23

Saturday:
Isaiah 49:1-6
Acts 13:22-26
Luke 1:57-66, 80

Next Sunday:
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Romans 5:12-15
Matthew 10:26-33