

SUNDAY PLUS

Calm down!

“Do you love me?”

In polite society you are not supposed to go around asking people questions like “Who do you say I am?” or “Do you love me?” perhaps because the answers might be deadening. Questions that go to the heart of the matter, particularly when the matter concerns what you really think of another person, are usually eased out of the conversation like slightly potty relatives are eased out of the room after they have misbehaved. In today’s Gospel, however, Jesus is in good voice when he asks Peter three times if he really loves him.

After a long night’s fishing the disciples come up with zero, and a distant figure on the shore tells them to try again. They pull in a marvellous haul. The beloved disciple identifies the figure as Jesus and Peter in his excitement tries treading water to be with him. Peter has a wet breakfast with the Lord.


After the meal Jesus asks Peter three times about the reality of his love. Insisting on love is something of a mark with Jesus. Three times Peter affirms his love, as three times Jesus insists on it. And when Peter professes his love, Jesus commissions him to

care for his flock. Seeing the Lord is always a dismissal for ministry; loving the Lord is always a charge to care for others.

And that is what Peter does. In spite of the opposition, Peter will continue insisting on his love for Jesus and this insistence will take him to martyrdom in Rome. In the end Jesus’ question “Simon, do you love me?” becomes profoundly unnecessary. There is nothing circumstantial about Peter’s love.

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

By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Loving Jesus, you calmed the anxiety of your disciples by the simple act of cooking breakfast for them. Help me to see that sometimes it’s the most mundane, ordinary things which can make all the difference to others.  Amen.

Jesus in the ordinary

By Sr Mary Burke FMDM

How wonderful it can be to return from a hard day’s work to find a meal cooked and ready! In today’s Gospel, Jesus provides for the physical needs as well as the spiritual needs of his disciples. They have been unsuccessful in their fishing attempts and by offering them a little advice, Jesus enables them to find an abundance of fish. Jesus’ invitation to do something practical and familiar eases their sense of loss and bewilderment, offers them security and calms their fears.

Bread and fish become the means by which Jesus makes himself known. Very ordinary and familiar food become symbols of the Lord’s resurrection and of Christ’s living presence with the disciples. Jesus sanctifies the ordinary and makes it holy. Perhaps, we too, in this coming week, might find Jesus’ present in the ordinary – calming us in the familiar and offering us food for our journey.

Sr Mary Burke is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Feast of the week Tuesday 3 May Ss Philip and James

When in Rome...

Everyone who visits Rome sees the Piazza Venezia, Forum and Colosseum. Try walking a couple of hundred yards from the Piazza Venezia to the church of the Holy Apostles. Instead of focusing on the upper basilica, where Bonnie Prince Charlie and his brother Cardinal Henry Stuart were baptised, their parents married and their mother’s heart preserved in a stone casket, go downstairs to the confessio underneath the high altar.

There, you will find the tomb of the apostles Philip and James. They are surrounded by glorious early Christian frescoes of the vine and branches, fish, loaves of bread, pelicans and a beautiful picture of Mary with Jesus on her knee – both dressed as Romans, in white gowns decorated by two dark stripes of imperial purple.

A closed-off staircase, 1400 years ago, led to the street, enabling people to pop in for a visit and pay their respects to Philip, James and other early martyrs. Nothing really changes, does it? We still make our personal mini-pilgrimages.

“In his compassion, Christ drew near to the sick in body and spirit, and brought them healing; he pardoned sinners and gave them new life. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who cares for his sheep. He is the Good Samaritan who stoops to help the injured man, binds his wounds and cares for him.”

Pope Francis

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:
1 Corinthians 15:1-8
John 14:6-14

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

(E) The English Martyrs
(Feast): Acts 7:55-60;
Matthew 10:17-20

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