

SUNDAY PLUS

Come home

Choosing to stay

by Fr Denis McBride
C.Ss.R.

When Joshua is an old man, and the country is resting from war, he calls all the tribes of Israel to the ancient sanctuary at Shechem. The story is told in today's first reading. All the elders, leaders, judges and scribes are called to listen to the last farewell of their distinguished leader. He does not recall his military victories, nor does he ask the people to cherish what he has done for them. Instead, he asks them to choose whom they wish to serve: the God of their ancestors or the false gods of the land they now inhabit.

Joshua is tired; he is old, death is looking him in the face. He has seen too much bloodshed to boast of the beauty of battle; he has seen too many ruined cities and disfigured corpses to sing of the glories of war.

The old commander is concerned with the geography of the heart.

Joshua knows that all choices have to be renewed, that people don't stay dedicated to a cause just by continuing to exist. Thus, Joshua wins the last and most important battle of his life when he leads his people to a victory of fidelity. They declare: "We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

The choice that Joshua offered his people is echoed in today's Gospel when Jesus offers his own followers the choice to stay with him or join the ranks of unbelievers. They know that past choices can become old and exhausted. The apostles do what we must all do: keep on choosing Jesus and stay with the one who has the message of eternal life.

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

Tho' long I may wander...

by Sr Penny Roker
RSM

It is hard for some people to accept that they are loved. A few years ago, when I was working in prison ministry, I came to know a "lifer" who refused all contact with his family. He could not believe their love would last or that he deserved it. Many of us at some time or other may have pushed away those who love us most.

Some of Jesus' followers abandoned him, not because of anything he demanded, but because he was offering too much, or so they thought – the gift of himself! According to ancient tradition, however, two of them

returned and were among the seventy apostles sent out to preach the Gospel.

It is never too late to come home. Jesus still offers himself in the sacrament of his Body and Blood. He still wants to share his life with us. He keeps on loving, no matter what.

Sr Penny Roker, a Sister of Mercy, counsellor and writer, is a regular contributor to *Living Word* and *Weekday Living Word*. See www.rpbooks.co.uk

"If we are to know the Lord, we must go to him. Listen to him in silence before the tabernacle and approach him in the sacraments."

Pope Francis

Come home

by Cowan Watson


I think it's fair to say that most of us will experience a time in our journey of faith when, like some of the followers of Jesus, we feel let down and dispirited, our mind filled with disturbing doubts. We can find ourselves straining to maintain a semblance of faith in a world which seems bent on trivialising our real spiritual needs.

At moments like this we can find ourselves echoing Peter's words, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

We need to hold fast, to remind ourselves that in matters of faith we cannot always trust our feelings and emotions. Undoubtedly, times like these can be a real struggle. Nevertheless, they also present real opportunities to nurture our

faith and to build confidence and hope, so that once again we can say with Peter, "You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God."

Cowan Watson is the Editor of *Light of the North*, the magazine of the Diocese of Aberdeen.

Be my compass, Lord. Keep me travelling towards you on my journey through life. Amen. 

Today:
Joshua 24:1-2, 15-18
Ephesians 5:21-32
John 6:60-69

Monday:
1 Thessalonians
1:1-5, 8-10
Matthew 23:13-22

Tuesday:
Apocalypse 21:9-14
John 1:45-51

Wednesday:
1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday:
1 Thessalonians 3:7-13
Matthew 24:42-51

Friday:
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8
Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday:
1 Thessalonians 4:9-11
Matthew 25:14-30

Next Sunday:
Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8
James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23