

# SUNDAY PLUS

## Look to Jesus!

By Fr Denis  
McBride C.Ss.R.

# John the witness

In John's Gospel the Baptist is treated in a different fashion from the other Gospels. There is no mention of his austere dress and diet; he does not confront the religious leaders with his fiery criticism; he does not send his disciples to ask Jesus if he is the Messiah. In John's Gospel the Baptist speaks only about Jesus and reveals to others the mystery of his person: "I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God." John is a man sent by God. He says of Jesus: "I did not know him myself." No one can know Jesus by himself. The Baptist knows him because the truth about Jesus has been revealed to him.

We have all been called to witness to Jesus. We are asked to point away from ourselves to Jesus; we are challenged to lead others

to the person of Jesus. The best way to do that is through our own genuine attachment to the Lord. Many people need help to come to Jesus. None of us comes to him alone. If only we had the courage to speak about Jesus to each other! Most people are moved when others share with them what really matters in their lives. Perhaps we have lost the courage to say any more what matters to us; perhaps we doubt if anyone will care.

We should take courage to share what we believe. With St John Henry Newman, we know that we believe because we love. In the power of that love, let us share our belief with each other.

Fr Denis McBride's many books, CDs and DVDs are available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)



## Make space and time

By Rachel Thompson

You'd think I've been teaching long enough to know by now. I can't expect my Year 9 class to appreciate their wonderful lesson and nominate me as teacher of the year. Still, after a challenging day I find myself frustrated and moaning about dragging horses to water. John the Baptist is a timely reminder. While usually inspired by his arresting prophetic preaching, today I see him anew. In pointing

out Jesus to his disciples, John is humbly directing them away from himself and towards life. Although John has had a vital role in grabbing people's attention and preparing them, he knows now it is time to step aside – and not without happily sharing the fact that he is also a learner who didn't initially know Jesus. John needed the Holy Spirit to really recognise Jesus as the Lamb of God. In the busyness of teaching, I also need to make space and time for the Holy Spirit and look to Jesus.

Rachel Thompson combines being a full-time secondary school teacher with being the Children's Editor for Redemptorist Publications.

Feast of the week  
Saturday 21 January

St Agnes  
(291-304)

Agnes was possibly aged about 12 or 13 when she died a martyr. Regarded as the patroness of young girls and of rape survivors, Agnes was apparently so beautiful that, disregarding her childhood, several men asked her to marry them. She courageously refused and, according to tradition, declared that she wanted to give herself wholly to God. This did

not go down well with the rich and famous of her day and one of them, Procop, the Governor's son, reported her to his father as a Christian. Agnes refused to deny her Christianity, regardless of the cost and so she was beheaded.

On the feast of St Agnes, the pope blesses two lambs which will be shorn on Holy Thursday. Their wool is woven into the pallium which an archbishop wears as a sign of his authority and union with the pope, who gives it to new archbishops on the feast of Ss Peter and Paul.

What does it mean for the Church, for us today, to be disciples of Jesus, the Lamb of God? It means replacing malice with innocence, replacing power with love, replacing pride with humility, replacing status with service. It is good work! We Christians must do this: replace malice with innocence, replace power with love, replace pride with humility, replace status with service.

Pope Francis

Lord, it is hard to be good, but stay with me and help me to put you at the centre of everything that I say, think and do. Amen.

Today:  
Isaiah 49:3, 5-6  
1 Corinthians 1:1-3  
John 1:29-34

Monday:  
Hebrews 5:1-10  
Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday:  
Hebrews 6:10-20  
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday:  
Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17  
Mark 3:1-6

Thursday:  
Hebrews 7:25 – 8:6  
Mark 3:7-12

Friday:  
Hebrews 8:6-13  
Mark 3:13-19

Saturday:  
Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14  
Mark 3:20-21

Next Sunday:  
Isaiah 8:23 – 9:3  
1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17  
Matthew 4:12-23