

# SUNDAY PLUS

Who do you say that I am?

## The importance of Peter



By Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

**G**iven the division in the Church today, the universal community of Christians clearly needs someone like St Peter, who will summarise in himself the unity of the whole Church. That is why the role of the papacy is at the centre of discussion between Roman Catholics and other Christians. We believe that being in communion with the pope, Peter's successor, is as important today as it was in the early Church. Too often, however, we tend to see the figure of the pope as the one who uses his keys, the symbol of his authority, to keep people out. But keys open doors as well as close them, they give access as well as prevent it. And many non-Catholics are hoping that Peter's representative can still become the great symbol of unity in the Church by using his authority in the service of unity.

This work of unity is something that can be seen practically at work in the second letter of Peter. In spite of the real differences between Peter and Paul, Peter speaks movingly about "our brother Paul, who is so dear to us" (3:15) and goes on to defend Paul against those who distort his words. Peter functions as the great unifier, the one who holds the different factions together, the one who is the first in the defence of those who have received a mission from God to spread the Gospel. He lives up to his new name: he really is a rock.

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

Being Christian is not just obeying orders but means being in Christ, thinking like him, acting like him, loving like him; it means letting him take possession of our life and change it, transform it and free it from the darkness of evil and sin.

Pope Francis


Who do you say that I am?

By Lucy Russell

I'm a wife, a mother and a teacher. I'm also a daughter, a sister and an aunt. I'm a writer and author. I'm the same person, but I'm seen differently through different eyes. How do I see me? What aspects of my own identity are most important to me? That is a question which on some days I can answer with confidence and

at other times is more difficult. Identity is important. It can be lost sometimes, bound up as it so often is in what we do. Can I describe myself as a writer if I'm not writing anything? In his song, "Science", Paul Weller sings, "I've got a pen in my pocket, does that make me a writer?" But who we are isn't what we do. Our relationships are what define us. Our identity is held by God and it's how I am seen through God's eyes that reveals who I am.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of *Who Do You Say You Are?*, available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)

May the Lord bless our steps, so that we can listen to young people, be their neighbours and bear witness before them to Jesus, the joy of our lives. Amen.  Amen.

Feast of the week  
Sunday 27 August

St Monica (c. 332-387)

Overshadowed in church history by her famous son, St Augustine of Hippo, Monica was a model wife, prudent daughter-in-law and loving mother. Her patience, charity and piety won over to Christianity her violent-tempered husband Patricius and her cantankerous, live-in mother-in-law. When her husband died, Augustine was just seventeen. Monica spent the next fifteen years encouraging her son, following him from North Africa to Rome and Milan where St Ambrose baptised Augustine and several of his friends.

Monica received sound advice from Ambrose about local church customs, which can be summarised as "When in Rome, do as the Romans do". He also told her that Augustine, "the son of so many tears and prayers" would not ultimately be lost – and he wasn't.

Monica died at Ostia, then Rome's great grain port, telling her sons, "Lay this body anywhere but wherever you both are, remember me at the altar of God"

Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Today:  
Isaiah 22:19-23  
Romans 11:33-36  
Matthew 16:13-20

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

Tuesday:  
Jeremiah 1:17-19  
Mark 6:17-29

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:  
Jeremiah 20:7-9  
Romans 12:1-2  
Matthew 16:21-27