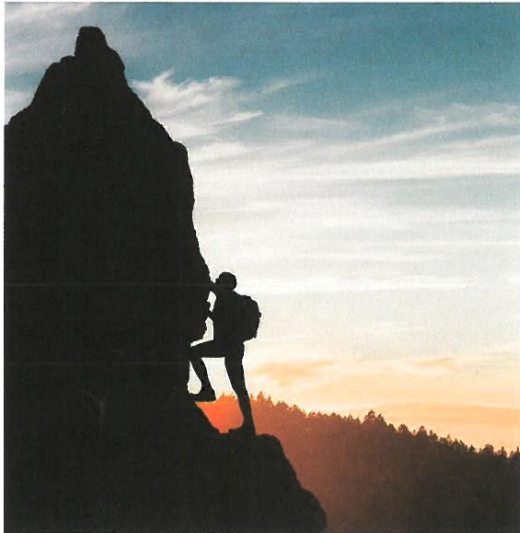


SUNDAY PLUS

With us always

Forever and always



By Sr Penny Roker RSM

Climbing a mountain, so they say, is to embark upon a journey of self-discovery. Mountaintops are places of revelation in the Bible, too, where people venture further still... to discover what God is like! It was on a mountain that Moses received God's Commandments. Disappearing into the swirling mists of Horeb, he encountered a God who was both awesome and intimate, majestic and merciful.

It comes as no surprise that the final resurrection appearance should be on a mountain. Speaking with divine authority over all creation, the Risen Jesus commands his disciples to teach the whole world his way of love. This for the most part was an anxiously superstitious world. People had yet to accept

themselves as beloved children of the one true God, a heavenly Father who understands what it is to be human and helps us to love as only God can. The disciples were to baptise believers in the name of this Triune God who is Father, and Son and Holy Spirit.

Some of the disciples hesitated to worship Jesus, struggling to reconcile an outworn image of God as terrifyingly unapproachable with what they had come to know of their humble companion. An encounter with the divine, it seems, explodes perceptions. God is love, and love turns out to be more than a lofty ideal beyond our reach. Love is a person who stays by our side and gives us strength to keep going. I am with you, Jesus says... close to you... for you... always!

Sr Penny Roker RSM is a Sister of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy

Always... in our hearts

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Modern Cairo is home to some of Egypt's oldest Christian churches – and a synagogue.

Tradition describes the fourth-century church of Ss Sergius and Bacchus ("the Cavern church") as built over the temporary home of the Holy Family, where they apparently lived as members of the established Jewish community, centred around the synagogue. There's no authentic proof of their presence – but it's feasible.

Ancient Jewish traditions record the ancient synagogue as marking

the place where Moses was hidden in the bullrushes. Treasuring their spiritually precious memory, it was perhaps inevitable that the community progressed from "This represents the place..." to "This is the place..." There's no concrete proof of Moses and the basket at that spot – but the association persists.

As early Christian understanding of Jesus grew, they recognised the parallels between the life stories of Moses and Jesus, "the new Moses".

Do we need tangible proof of Moses' watery concealment or the Holy Family's home? "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe." Jesus – and Moses – are with us always... in our hearts.

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

So, let us all think about this: the Father has given us life; Jesus has given us salvation, he accompanies us, he leads us, he supports us, he teaches us; and the Holy Spirit? What does he give us? He loves us! He gives us love. Let us think of God in this way.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Friday 31 May

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

What was Mary thinking as she set out to visit her cousin Elizabeth? The angel had told her that Elizabeth was already six months pregnant, but Mary also carried life within her womb. As she hurried to support Elizabeth, did she hope that she would find an understanding heart for herself? Both were first-time mothers who relied on others for explanations and insight as their pregnancies progressed. Both had questions, but some of their questions could find

no answer from the people around them.

Elizabeth's husband could not speak and would not do so until after John's birth. Mary had no husband. She must still tell her parents and Joseph that her baby had no human father. Joseph would be the foster father of a very special baby. As she travelled to Elizabeth, was Mary scared? Did their time together give Mary the courage she would need to speak to her parents and Joseph?

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, who was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.  Amen.

Today:
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40
Romans 8:14-17
Matthew 28:16-20

Monday:
1 Peter 1:3-9
Mark 10:17-27

Tuesday:
1 Peter 1:10-16
Mark 10:28-31

Wednesday:
1 Peter 1:18-25
Mark 10:32-45

Thursday:
1 Peter 2:2-5, 9-12
Mark 10:46-52

Friday:
Zephaniah 3:14-18
or Romans 12:9-16
Luke 1:39-56

Saturday:
Jude 17, 20-25
Mark 11:27-33

Next Sunday:
Exodus 24:3-8
Hebrews 9:11-15
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26