

SUNDAY PLUS

Hold my hand

Believing and belonging

by Fr Denis
McBride C.Ss.R.

When we gather each week to celebrate the memory of Jesus, we help each other by our very presence at Mass. Turning up is an act of faith. Our faith gives us a sense of belonging to a large community: when we believe, we belong. We believe together. As Christians the principal object of our faith is Jesus the Lord and, although we are many in number, we share our belief and trust in him. But the community of faith can never be a substitute for individual faith.

Nobody can do our believing for us. You see this dramatically illustrated

by Thomas the apostle. Thomas refuses to become part of this company of believers, for it is not enough for him to shelter in a faith that he cannot credit for himself. He may want to believe, yearn to accept as true what the others say, but his wish cannot struggle into faith.

If faith is one of the principal gifts of the Spirit, it is also a form of life that has to be nurtured, helped to grow, loved into maturity. Faith is a life and like any life it can wither if forgotten or overlooked. Faith can die from a lifetime's neglect. We need to pray about our faith, think



about our faith, live the life of our faith. That does not mean that we will never have our doubts; but if, like Thomas, we care about what we believe in,

that care, in time, will bring us into the presence of the living Lord.

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

Be my friend

"Don't walk in front of me:
I may not follow.
Don't walk behind me:
I may not lead.
Walk beside me, and
just be my friend."

Writer unknown



Stay with me

by Moire O'Sullivan

When someone is mourning the death of a loved one, it is difficult to know what to say. We can instead churn out the stock phrases:

"I'm sorry for your loss."

"If there is anything I can do, let me know."

Silence is awkward when faced with someone who is grieving. We want to fill the empty space with words, or make our excuses and quickly disappear.

When I lost my husband, I got tired of hearing these same words. I soon found that it was those who said nothing who helped me the most. They let me cry, they let me vent, they let me go round and round in circles repeating the same

thing. They gave me the space to expel the sad thoughts that were bottled up inside.

So when you don't know what to say to someone who is suffering, don't say anything. Just stay there in that awkward silence and be ready to listen for when they're ready to speak.

Moire O'Sullivan is a mountain instructor and author based in Northern Ireland. She derives her inspiration from her time as a Mill Hill lay missionary in Kenya and an NGO worker throughout Africa and Asia. Her latest book, *A Quarter Glass of Milk* will be published in spring 2021.

**"To touch the living God,
we do not need to attend a
'refresher course' but to enter
into the wounds of Jesus, and
to do so, all we need to do is
go out onto the street."**

Pope Francis

My Lord and my God, I love you and I adore you. Amen.