

## Reflection Friday 5<sup>th</sup> Week of Easter 2020

Did you note in the Acts of the Apostles that the decision, not to impose circumcision on the pagan Christians or subject them to Jewish Law, was delivered by Paul and Barnabas and two appointed lay people, Judas and Silas (also known as Silvanus). The early Church recognised the importance of the lay faithful and involved them in their decision making. Silas went on to accompany and assist Paul with his missionary activities. Paul never missioned alone. Once again, we see the importance and value of the lay faithful in the development of the early Church. A role that was both recognised and affirmed as being valuable, necessary and important.

The role of the faithful cannot be stressed and valued enough during this time of lockdown. It is the laity who are keeping the faith alive in their homes and families, just as they have done down through the centuries. Many of the grass-root Christian communities in South America and Africa are led by lay people supported only by rare visits from the priest who can stay for only short amounts of time. These grass-root communities are thriving. *“The pastoral ministry offered by the Basic Ecclesial Communities aims to meet the challenge of establishing caring communities in which faith is lived out in daily life by paying closer attention to believers’ lifestyles and tangible desires; communities which not only exist formally and institutionally, but which offer scope for spontaneity and in which diverse charismatic manifestations are given space to emerge. They can be smaller communities than the conventional parish communities, in which the practices of agape, sharing and solidarity are encouraged via human intimacy. In short, communities tailored to human needs in which the humanity of faith is experienced.* André Kabasele Mukenge. With the growing shortage of priests in the West, the lay faithful are stepping forward to maintain and sustain the faith of the people in their community with the blessing of the Bishop. The Holy Spirit is always present among us, so we should keep the words of Jesus in the forefront of our minds and actions, *“Love one another as I have loved you!”* Then, as Julian of Norwich said *“All shall be well! And all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well!* She added: *“The greatest honour we can give Almighty God is to live gladly because of the knowledge of his love.”* And: *God loved us before he made us; and his love has never diminished and never shall.”* When Jesus says *I command* you to love one another, it is tantamount to him saying that we are given the authority to love others with the love of Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit. And that is true love!!

### Now here is something to really groan about . . . .

I used to work in a shoe recycling plant . . . . .	It was sole destroying!!”
What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire?	Frostbite!
What goes down but doesn't come up?	A yo.
What's E.T. short for?	Because he's got little legs.
What do you call a boomerang that doesn't come back?	A stick!