

Love me do

Heather Cooke *reflects on* John 15:9-17

When the Beatles notched up their first number one hit in 1962, the lyrics were simple yet profound: "Love, love me do! You know I love you." Imagine Jesus saying that to you. Unrequited love is a tragic business; mutual love brings the joy Jesus speaks of in today's Gospel. We know he loves us because "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

But he didn't just say that, he lived it. He didn't just feel love, he showed it. And because Jesus loves us, he wants us to love one another – and, in so doing, to show how much we love him. Earlier that evening (as recounted in John 14:15) he'd said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." The new commandment he gave his friends, on this night before he showed them the extent of his own love, was to love one another as he had loved them.

Do we want Jesus to think that his great love for us is unrequited? If we love him, surely we can try to love those whom he loves? Love is more than a feeling, a sentiment, a romantic notion. Real love is a practical matter. Can we lay down our lives, not by dying as he would do on the cross, but by dedicating our lives to the loving service of others? ☺

Father of all, your Son revealed your love in his actions, not just words. This Christian Aid Week and always, help us to follow his example and show the world that loving him means giving hope to others. Amen.

The Church Fathers

Part 7, Origen

by Richard Gunning

Richard Gunning concludes his series about the early Church Fathers.

Origen (c. 185-255) was another Church Father who was never proclaimed a saint, possibly because of his much-publicised self-castration, having allegedly taken a verse in Matthew's Gospel literally: "For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Because of this, Origen's achievements are sometimes overlooked. But in fact he wrote more than two thousand works and was probably the most important scholar and theologian of the era leading up to the First Council of Nicaea, in AD 325. He produced treatises in many branches of theology, including textual criticism, Bible studies and interpretation, sermons and spirituality. His most important work on textual criticism was the *Hexapla* ("Sixfold"), a huge comparative study of various translations of the Old Testament, set out in six columns. ☺



An Egyptian pilgrimage

by Sr Janet Fearn

Last summer, Sr Janet visited Egypt and Turkey. Here she gives us a tour of some of the places she visited on the Egypt leg of her tour.

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 having been built over the temporary home of the Holy Family, where they apparently lived for three months as members of the established Jewish community, centred around the synagogue.

There's no proof of their presence in what is now the Coptic area of modern Cairo, but it's feasible. As a carpenter, Joseph could easily have found work at nearby Giza, Memphis or Heliopolis. They might have used the well.

Is that based on fact, or a pious wish? Did they, or didn't they? Who knows? Does it matter? Countless people, over the centuries, have visited the church and remembered Jesus, Mary and Joseph. That's what is important.

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“God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.”

Pope Francis