Newbec

NEW WAY OF BEING CHURCH

5th Sunday of Easter
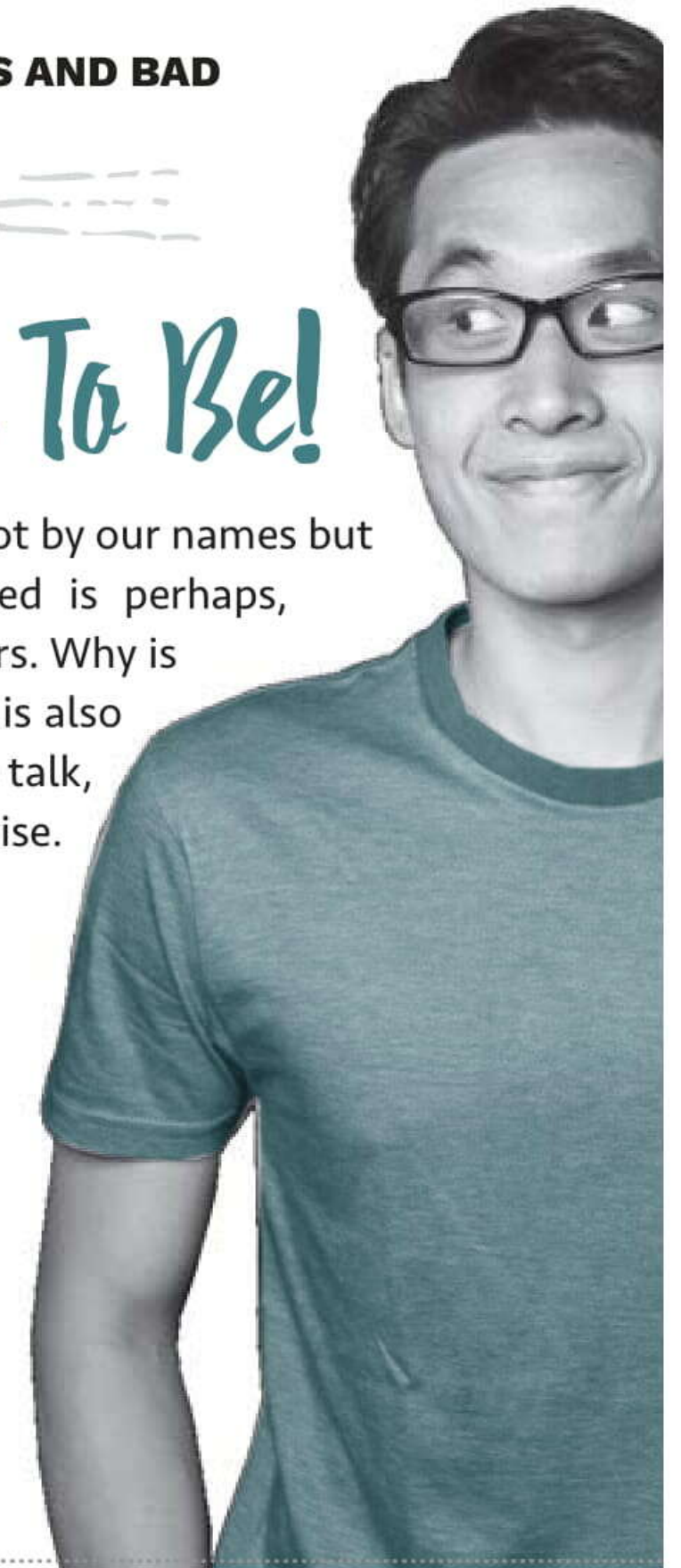
HOPE: BELIEVE, LIVE AND GIVE

MONTHLY THEME:
TOGETHERNESS IN GOOD TIMES AND BAD

Be Who God Wants You To Be!

As Christians, we are often judged not by our names but by our actions. The yardstick used is perhaps, longer than the one used to judge others. Why is that so? It is seemingly unfair. Yet, this is also the standard set by Christ. He walks the talk, and he expects his followers to do likewise.

John 13:34-35 sums it all when Jesus says, *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."* To this, he further exclaims, *"Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (Jn 15:13)

It is a tall order to be a Christian. How does one lay down his life for his friends? Yet, by faith, we know we have a God who loves us and knows our limitations. St Paul tells us in Romans 3:23-24 that, *"since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."* Today's Gospel reading takes further our need to be 'Christ-centered' in all that we do, whether as an individual or as a community. When we are cut off from Christ, we can do nothing. (cf Jn 15:5).

If we remain centred on Jesus, we can use our gift(s) to bear good fruits, fruits that will advance the Kingdom of God. This effort takes commitment, courage, endurance and compassion, but this should be our ultimate goal: to be of service to others. Then the world will know we are Christians by our love. With God, all things are possible! (Mt 19:26).

If we do not remain in Christ but are self-centred, we may find ourselves spending our energy having unnecessary disputes or disagreements. It will be counter-productive and will lead to disharmony in our community. Pope Francis in addressing the US Congress is addressing us, 'Let us treat others with the same passion with which we want to be treated ... for the yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.'

This Easter Season, **be who God wants you to be and let God work in and on you** while you focus on being Christ-like to others.