

SUNDAY PLUS

Do not be afraid

No need to fear

By Paul Higginson

Courage! It is!! Do not be afraid. If you ever wanted to memorise something Jesus said and have it ready for all life's situations then perhaps this is the phrase to go for!

These words, said to Peter on the rough seas, were meant for us to hear too. Jesus is telling us to always be brave: he is with us, we have no need to fear. When Peter doubts, he begins to sink and when we take our eyes off the Lord it is easy for us to lose heart, to doubt if God is really there. But even when we stop believing in him, he never stops believing in us. Jesus grabbed Peter's hand and held him, and in our times of need we too are called to put our hand in his, to trust that he will be with us always.

Jesus understands that fear is the enemy of faith. If we are afraid, it is hard to risk love, to make ourselves vulnerable and open up to others. Fear paralyses us. It makes us wary of setting foot on the waters of life, but God says, "Do not be afraid... I have called you by your name. You are mine". We all at some point experience the storms and the rough seas of life, but our strength comes from knowing that the one who stilled the waves and controlled the winds is by our side, with his hand in ours.

Paul Higginson is a retired teacher, and author of Doing Christianity: How religion is about what you do, not what you believe.



Knock on God's heart, on Jesus' heart. "Lord, save me." It is a beautiful prayer! We can repeat it many times. "Lord, save me."

Pope Francis

True heroes

By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

Imagine the shock of the Thai football team, trapped in a flooded underground cave from 23 June to 10 July 2018, when an unknown voice asked, "How many of you?" When divers John Paul Volanthen and Rick Stanton emerged from the water and hope dawned of a rescue, it was clear that it would be high-risk, difficult, complex and might be unsuccessful. The world watched as plans unfolded and, one by one, experienced cave rescuers brought twelve boys and their coach to safety.

Volanthen and Stanton insisted that they and their companions were not heroes, saying, "We're just using a very unique skill set, which we normally use for our own interest and sometimes we're able to use that to give something back to the community."

True heroes don't boast about their courage and the enormity of their achievement. Someone who is unafraid is not brave. The brave person does what is right despite being afraid. That is why they deserve our respect.

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

Feast of the week
Tuesday 15 August

The Assumption of Our Lady

The dogma of the Assumption, proclaimed in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, has its origins in the popular faith of the Christian community. The definition states that Mary enjoys eternal life with her son, a goal that we all hope to attain eventually.

We may understand the Assumption of Mary in the images of today's first reading: "A woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the moon, and with twelve stars on her head for a crown". However we imagine Mary's Assumption, we always return to the simple portrait of her in the pages of the Gospel, where she is neither an earthbound star nor a heavenly queen.

In Luke's Magnificat Mary is the lowly handmaid who rejoices in the loving look

of God her saviour and blesses him for the great things he accomplishes in her.

In the Magnificat we see Mary as the radical woman. She is the woman who hungers for a new justice on earth, one that reflects the justice of God. The God who did not overlook her is the God who dethrones the mighty and exalts the lowly. In this dispensation the hungry are filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. Mary voices a contrary wisdom. She voices a radical protest against what we all take for granted: that the mighty will always prevail over the weak, that the well-fed nations will thrive while others starve to death, that the politically strong will always occupy the thrones of power.

Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R.

Today:
1 Kings 19:9, 11-13
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:22-33

Monday:
Deuteronomy 10:12-22
Matthew 17:22-27

Tuesday:
Apocalypse 11:19; 12:1-6, 10
1 Corinthians 15:20-26
Luke 1:39-56

Wednesday:
Deuteronomy 34:1-12
Matthew 18:15-20

Thursday:
Joshua 3:7-11, 13-17
Matthew 18:21-19:1

Friday:
Joshua 24:1-13
Matthew 19:3-12

Saturday:
Joshua 24:14-29
Matthew 19:13-15

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 56:1, 6-7
Romans 11:13-15, 29-32
Matthew 15:21-28