

SUNDAY PLUS

Come to me!

Do not be afraid



by Fr Richard Biggerstaff

They say that the phrase “Do not be afraid” appears in the Bible over three-hundred and sixty-five times; at least once for every day of the year. We need to hear these words of Jesus every day, because every day there is something which makes us fearful. It may be the fear of failure, or the fear of being thought more successful than we know ourselves to be; it may be the fear of rejection or the fear of an inability to love as we should; it may be the fear of debt or the fear of not knowing what to do with money we do not need; it may be the fear of just living, or the fear of death. Jesus comes to us in all our fears and calms them. He is the answer to our deepest uncertainties

and he is our ultimate consolation and our peace. Gently he comes to us and especially when we take time to be before him in the Blessed Sacrament. When the disciples said, “It is a ghost,” it was because they could not believe it was Jesus. As we pray before the tabernacles of our churches many doubts will try to convince us that Jesus is not there, that our faith is useless. But the Lord will speak to us and say every day, “Do not be afraid” – and all our fears will calm and we will be filled with the peace and presence of the Lord.

Fr Richard Biggerstaff is the director of the St Barnabas Society. The society supports those who leave ministry in other Christian churches to become Catholics.

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Jesus’ words always give hope!... Jesus himself sought out these tired, worn-out crowds like sheep without a shepherd and he sought them out to proclaim to them the kingdom of God and to heal many of them in body and spirit. Now he calls them all to himself: ‘Come to me’ and he promises them relief and rest.

Pope Francis

Landings

by Fr Dominic Robinson SJ

Do you know someone who has fallen away from the Catholic faith? If so, and you think they need to talk honestly, receive a warm welcome and so perhaps come back, the Landings programme this autumn might help.

The programme, successful across parishes in the US, UK and Singapore over thirty years, offers to those who’ve been away a necessarily safe place to land, especially if there’s been a bumpy ride. It’s a place for being heard, asking questions and reconnecting with your faith.

During the eight-week Landings process, a small group of active Catholics, some of them “returnees” themselves, meets with a small group of returning Catholics to share and explore their faith together. There’s lots of listening, telling stories, some teaching where needed, prayer and sharing.

For more information on a group near you this autumn (or to start one), contact Helen Carvalhido-Gilbert at landingsuk@gmail.com or Fr Dominic Robinson SJ at dominicrobinson@rcdow.org.uk For more information see Landings.org.uk

Fr Dominic Robinson SJ teaches dogmatic and pastoral theology at Heythrop College, University of London.

Exam results

by Laura Pettett

St Catherine of Siena, a doctor of the Church, wrote: “Be who God’s called you to be and set the world on fire.” Please note that she did not write: Get as many qualifications as you can and you will set the world on fire!”

God loves variety and his way is not one-size-fits-all. God has called us in so many different directions. Mary could easily have been judged for being pregnant before marriage, but while people perhaps believed that a young woman had lost her chance of a good life, God and the angels celebrated her “yes” to God’s call.

What is important is not our exam results, but that we are saying yes to God.

We are not only the Easter people; we are also the Advent

people, always pregnant with a life of joy, hope and love that God has directly given – waiting in the knowledge that the best is yet to come.

Laura Pettett is a London teacher.

**Loving Lord,
sometimes you
feel like the
hound of heaven,
following me
when I want to
escape from the
challenges you
set before me.
Yet really, Lord,
I want you more
than I can say. Let
me hear your call
and run into your
open arms. Amen.**

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