

SUNDAY PLUS

Stay calm!

Big questions



By Michael George

At school, children are sometimes encouraged to ask and explore “big questions”. These questions can be thought about and discussed with the insight of faith but will only be properly answered and understood when we meet God face to face. “Who made God?” is a favourite for young children. “Why do some people suffer so much more than others?” may be a question for older learners. These are big questions because

we reason with a human mind, not the mind of God.

Holiness may be seen as a state of union with the mind of God. In today’s Gospel, Jesus was questioned by two of the people who knew him best; their human minds did not lead them to fully understand the mind of God. They asked and listened so that they might understand. They sought holiness.

The Gospel concludes with the promise that all Christian people would be empowered to continue Jesus’ work on earth. As St Teresa of Avila wrote, “We are Christ’s hands on earth today.” What a

privilege and what a duty is this calling for all Christians!

A duty can become a burden, but not, surely, if we take to heart Jesus’ words, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.” Whenever duty weighs heavily, we are invited to remain calm, to trust God and to seek holiness, with faith that the day will come when our minds will indeed be at one with the mind of God.

Michael George has served Catholic primary schools as a teacher and headteacher for more than twenty years.

Let go, let God

By Natasha Pritchard

“Do not let your hearts be troubled” – how comforting these words are, but also how easy it is to forget them. We can sometimes be so preoccupied with worries that we forget that God has already promised to take care of them for us.

When Jesus says, “You may ask me for anything”, He means it. Even the things we dare not speak out loud to those closest to us, God knows before we have

even asked. He is there to call us out of the darkness of our minds and into the light of trusting in Him. We need to trust enough to let go of the darkness that we have become accustomed to.

Today’s reading from Acts shows us that the early disciples knew their priorities. It is a reminder to us that our highest calling is to pray, setting the little worries aside and focusing our hearts and minds once more on God.

Natasha Pritchard has worked in Catholic hospital chaplaincy, youth ministry and is now Area Support Chaplain at Methodist Homes.

Today we can ask ourselves: what are the winds that beat against my life? What are the waves that hinder my navigation, and put my spiritual life, my family life, even my mental health in danger? Let us say all this to Jesus; let us tell him everything. He wants this; he wants us to grab hold of him to find shelter from the unexpected waves of life.

Pope Francis

Feast of the week Thursday 11 May

Bl John Rochester


(c. 1498–1537)

Henry Garnet wrote of his Jesuit companion, John Gerard:

“Twice he has been hung up by the hands with great cruelty on the part of others and no less patience on his own. The examiners say he is exceedingly obstinate and a great friend either of God or of the devil, for they say they cannot extract a word from his lips, save that, amidst his torments, he speaks the word, ‘Jesus.’”

His words are equally applicable to the Essex-born Carthusian monk, Bl John Rochester, who was also suspended above the floor by chains fastened to his wrists. John was eventually hanged, drawn and quartered in York in 1537 alongside another Carthusian, James Walworth.

Altogether, fifteen of the community of the London Charterhouse died as martyrs, amongst them the prior St John Houghton. Houghton, Robert Lawrence and Augustine Webster, respectively priors of Beauvale and Axholme, were the first three Catholic martyrs of the Reformation in England and Wales.

Jesus, help me not to move into panic mode. Help me to take a deep breath and count to ten before I start to expect disasters which might never happen. Teach me to stay calm and trust in you.  Amen.

Today:
Acts 6:1-7
1 Peter 2:4-9
John 14:1-12

Monday:
Acts 14:5-18
John 14:21-26

Tuesday:
Acts 14:19-28
John 14:27-31

Wednesday:
Acts 15:1-6
John 15:1-8

Thursday:
Acts 15:7-21
John 15:9-11

Friday:
Acts 15:22-31
John 15:12-17

Saturday:
Acts 16:1-10
John 15:18-21

Next Sunday:
Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
1 Peter 3:15-18
John 14:15-21