

SUNDAY PLUS

Room for change!

Whatever the changes

By Michael George

Change is part of life. Our lives and the world around us do not stay still for long. Looking back to our childhood, to last year, perhaps even to last week, we can identify changes that have taken place in our lives and in our communities. Change happens. Sometimes change is accompanied with excitement and pleasure: change for the better. At other times change brings uncertainty, sadness and worry.

In today's Gospel, three of Jesus' disciples experienced a vision in which Jesus was changed. It was a change of which they had no understanding and which provoked confusion and anxiety. "Do not be afraid", Jesus said.

Jesus might have said, "You do not need to be afraid," or asked, "Why are you afraid?" but he did not. He gave an instruction, "Do not be afraid."

Each of us will be familiar with instructions telling us what to do in particular situations. We need, for example, instructions about how to use a self-service checkout in a supermarket, or how to evacuate a building in the event of an emergency. We associate the following of instructions with performing actions.

Only Jesus could give an instruction that did not tell people what to do, but told them how to feel. Only Jesus could give this instruction because in a world of change God is the one constant. God does not change. We are safe in God's hands, now and always, whatever the changes within us and around us that form our human experience.

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



When there are difficulties, it is necessary to examine them closely, to take them up and to talk about them.

Never hide them. Life is like this. Life must be taken as it comes, not as we would like it to come. It is a little like the goalkeeper of the team, isn't it? He grabs the ball wherever it comes from. This is the reality.

Pope Francis

Room for change

By Lucy Russell

When I was pregnant with James, I hoped to have a water birth. It didn't happen. I always thought sitting down with my midwife and discussing a birthing plan was nonsensical. I could plan all I wanted, but that didn't mean anything would necessarily work out that way. Starting a family is a truly life-changing experience which involves giving up a certain amount of the control you think you have over your own life. We had made changes at home before James arrived. We had decorated a nursery for him and changed the furniture around in the front room to accommodate a nursing chair and Moses basket. But I didn't expect bringing him home for the first time to feel like it was the first time I had seen the house too. Every room looked and felt different, as though I was seeing it through different eyes.

Dr Lucy Russell is the author of Who Do You Say You Are?, available from Redemptorist Publications, www.rpbooks.co.uk

Feast of the week
Tuesday 8 August

St Dominic

(1170-1221)


Today, in accordance with tradition, the Minister General of the Franciscans will visit his Dominican counterpart to celebrate the 800-year-old friendship between the two orders. Dominicans and Franciscans will remember the friendship between Ss Dominic and Francis of Assisi, two men who were so closely aligned in their thinking that Dominic suggested that Francis and his followers might join the emerging Order of Preachers. Wisely, Francis refused,

seeing that God was leading them in very different directions. The Dominicans would lead through learning and scholarship.

An outstanding organiser, Dominic engaged heretics in dialogue rather than browbeating them into submission to the Church, refusing to take part in any "holy war". His thinking was that a simple, prayerful, scholarly life that did not deny human values was far more effective than bullying.

St Dominic is often portrayed before Our Lady, who is giving him a rosary. The worldwide spread of the Rosary, a prayer that does not depend on books and literacy, is attributed to Dominic's preaching.

Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Lord, sometimes I don't want to go to the trouble of making changes in life. My little rut can feel comfortable and safe. Give me the courage to occasionally step outside my boundaries and broaden my horizons.  Amen.

Today:
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
2 Peter 1:16-19
Matthew 17:1-9

Monday:
Numbers 11:4-15
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday:
Numbers 12:1-13
Matthew 14:22-36

Wednesday:
Numbers 13:1-2, 25 - 14:1,
26-29, 34-35
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday:
2 Corinthians 9:6-10
John 12:24-26

Friday:
Deuteronomy 4:32-40
Matthew 16:24-28

Saturday:
Deuteronomy 6:4-13
Matthew 17:14-20

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