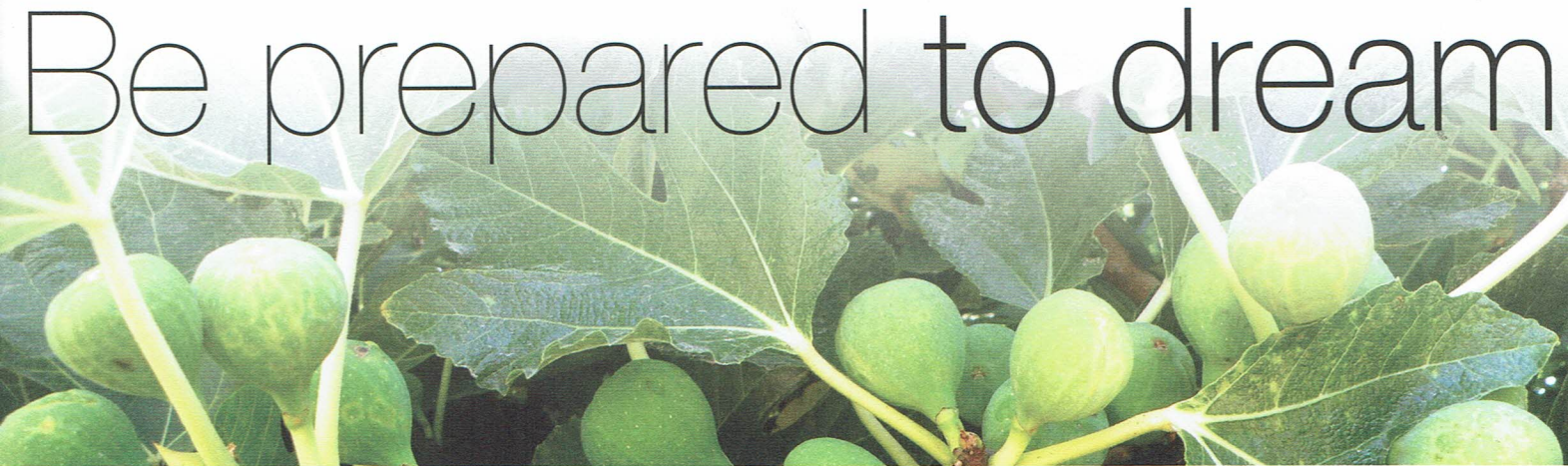


SUNDAY PLUS

Signs of the times

Be prepared to dream



by Fr Fons Eppink MHM

“I have a dream.” Martin Luther King could have been thinking of today’s readings when he spoke those iconic words. Just look at the Gospel and what the prophet Daniel has to say. They are two very different dreams or visions at first sight. One speaks of apocalyptic disruption and distress, the whole universe out of joint. The other uses the image of a budding fig tree to tell us in allegorical language what the future holds. Both envisage the coming of “the Son of Man.”

What are we to make of all this? These visions obviously mean to tell us something important about the future of our world – God’s future – and our place in it. Our world, the way we have constructed and organised it, with its power structures and inbuilt injustices, needs to be dislodged and transformed. Only then will humans truly be able to flourish, showing the image and likeness in which we are created.

My own branches and twigs need to grow supple. I need to waken from my wintry hibernation, my leaves need to unfold to receive

the light of the other person’s goodness. Receptivity, openness, hospitality are key words in this process. Our world transformed into the kingdom of the Son of Man.

Is this an impossible dream? If we nurture the idea that we can bring about this transformation by our own efforts we’re on the wrong track. No one but the Father knows the time and the mode of the fulfilment. The principal task of us, as Christians, is to make room, to allow God to widen our hearts.

Fr Fons Eppink, a Mill Hill Missionary, spent many years as a missionary in Africa and Asia.

Read the signs

by Catherine Pepinster

The gloom of darkening days as winter approaches, the difficulties of life, the alarming state of the world: it can become tempting to be pessimistic about what life holds for us. But for a Christian there is always hope, as there was for the psalmist celebrating God’s constancy:

“You show me the path of life. In your presence their is fullness of joy”.

Jesus urges us to note the signs of his coming, just as we do on a spring day, when the new green bursts forth on the trees. There is hope if we look for it in life, when we experience kindness and witness self-sacrifice.

But our greatest optimism is saved for Christ the redeemer who will return in glory. We are urged to be ready and to understand the signs of

what is to come. So for now, we must be watchful and not lose heart.

Catherine Pepinster is a former editor of The Tablet and the author of The Keys and the Kingdom – the British and the papacy from John Paul II to Francis, published by T&T Clark.

“**There is no human virtue that has the least power to exert influence over time. The only virtue that can help us to confront the mystery of time must be given to us by the Lord: it is hope.**

Pope Francis

Times change

by Sr Janet Fearn
FMDM

Two elderly ladies chatted on the bus. “I remember when those houses over there were stables and a farrier’s yard”, one commented. “I never thought that, one day, the stables would be gone and that their place would be taken by a housing estate. It’s sad, but nothing ever stays the same, does it?”

Yet isn’t there a feeling inside each one of us which wants some things at least to remain unchanged? Somehow, when we walk down memory lane, it can be hard to realise that time has moved on and that familiar faces and places are no more.

During November, we remember our loved ones who have died. Some

feel so close that it hurts not to see and hear them once again. What wouldn’t we give to have them back, if only for five minutes. Yet life isn’t like that. We are moving towards being reunited with them – and for ever. Times change but love remains.

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

Lord, give eternal life to all those who have died, especially those who were close to me during their time here on earth. Give them my special love and a big hug. Amen.

Today:
Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-14. 18
Mark 13:24-32

Monday:
Apocalypse 1:1-4; 2:1-5
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday:
Apocalypse 3:1-6. 14-22
Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday:
Apocalypse 4:1-11
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday:
Apocalypse 5:1-10
Luke 19:41-44

Friday:
Apocalypse 10:8-11
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday:
Apocalypse 11:4-12
Luke 20:27-40

Next Sunday:
Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37