

SUNDAY PLUS

Do not be afraid

Be brave!

By Michael George

At this time one year ago, Pope Francis celebrated the first World Children's Day. 50,000 children gathered with the Pope in Rome to pray and to talk.

One participant, Lucy, from Australia, asked Pope Francis, "Are you happy to spend time with us children? Why?" Pope Francis replied, "I am truly happy. I am happy because you are joyful, because you have the joy of hope in the future. Keep going, be brave, and continue to be joyful."

At school we sometimes say that a smile is contagious. When you give somebody a smile it is likely that they will smile back. We also talk about "being radiators".

When we are positive and happy it warms others and contributes to others also feeling more positive and happier. The joy of the children radiated to warm and hearten Pope Francis and others.

Pope Francis remarked on the children's hope for the future and encouraged them to "be brave". Fear is often associated with the unknown. When we don't know what the future holds our inclination may be to fear the worst, rather than hope for the best. In contrast, when the future path is clear and well-lit we may embark upon it with confidence and hope.

In today's Gospel, Jesus, like Pope Francis, urges "do not be afraid". Jesus removes fear of the unknown. Jesus gives a certain promise of what the present and the future hold – the peace of God, and the well-lit path to the joy of eternal life.

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Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

24-25 May: Jubilee of Children



All of you, girls and boys, are a source of joy for your parents and your families, but also for our human family and for the Church, in which each of us is like a link in a great chain stretching from the past to the future and covering the whole earth. That is why I encourage you to pay attention to the stories of grown-ups: your moms and dads, your grandparents and great-grandparents. And not to forget all those other children and young people who are already battling illness and hardship, in hospital or at home, and those who even now are being cruelly robbed of their childhood. I think of children who are victims of war and violence, those experiencing hunger and thirst, those living on the streets, those forced to be soldiers or to flee as


refugees, separated from their parents, those prevented from going to school, and those who fall prey to criminal gangs, drugs or other forms of slavery and abuse. Let us listen to their voices...

When we are all together, everything is different! Think of your friends, and how great it is to spend time with them: at home, at school, in the parish and the playground, everywhere. Playing, singing, discovering new things, having fun, everyone being together and excluding no one. Friendship is wonderful and it grows only in this way: through sharing and forgiving, with patience, courage, creativity and imagination, without fear and without prejudice.

Pope Francis

Don't be afraid to ask God for forgiveness. He never tires of forgiving us. God is pure mercy.

Pope Francis

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son and to the
Holy Spirit, who was in the
beginning, is now and ever
shall be, world without end.
 Amen.

Today:
Acts 15:1-2, 22-29
Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23
John 14:23-29

Monday:
Acts 16:11-15
John 15:26 - 16:4a

Tuesday:
Acts 16:22-34
John 16:5-11

Wednesday:
Acts 17:15, 22 - 18:1
John 16:12-15

Thursday:
Acts 1:1-11
Ephesians 1:17-23
Luke 24:46-53

Friday:
Acts 18:9-18
John 16:20-23

Saturday:
Zephaniah 3:14-18a
or Romans 12:9-16
Luke 1:39-56

Next Sunday:
Acts 7:55-60
Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20
John 17:20-26