

**June 21, 2020 – 12th Sunday of Ordinary**



**"Being convinced of the Lord's Mighty Presence in our lives and of our preciousness to Him, let us allow all our "fears" to propel and boost our Christian Missionary lives!"  
(Jer 20:10-13, Rom 5: 12-15 and Mt 10:26-33)**

**Anecdote 1**

Five-year-old Jack was in the kitchen as his mother made supper. She asked him to go into the storeroom (the place where much of the provisions were stored) and get her a can of tomato soup. But Jack didn't want to go in alone there and cried: "It's dark in there and I'm scared, Mamma". She asked again, and he persisted in his refusal. Finally, she said, "Jack, look... there is nothing to fear in going to that store-room. Jesus will be in there, with you..." The constant request and this assurance made Jack to walk hesitantly to the door and slowly open it. He peeked inside, saw it was dark, got all frightened, and started to leave when all at once an idea came, and he said: "Jesus, if you're in there, would you, please, hand me that can of tomato soup?!" Well, this little anecdote highlights a common trend that is evident in many of our lives: Fear takes an upper hand in many of our activities and renders us fragile. Fear has a strong grip over our minds and hearts in many situations and makes us weak.

**Anecdote 2**

The Indians of the American Southwest believed that every animal was intended to teach us a lesson on how to live. It was the rattlesnake, they believed, that was meant to teach us about fear. The Indians believed that in late summer when the rattlesnake would shed its skin, it became temporarily immobile and blind. It was therefore in a very vulnerable position. In that position, it was controlled by fear. Whenever it would sense a movement in its vicinity, it would immediately strikeout in blindness after the sound that it had heard. If anything brushed against its skin, it would immediately bite the spot that had been touched, thereby injecting venom into its own body from its fangs. This of course would lead to death. So according to the American Indians, the lesson that the rattlesnake teaches us about fear is this: Our fear can destroy us. That is why it is very important for each one of us to identify the fears in our lives and to deal with them.

It is important that we do this because ignoring fears can lead to blindness and paralysis. Ignoring fears can rob us of life. So, are you afraid? Take time in answering this question, because not all fear is the same. There is a violent, obvious fear, a fear that sets our hearts pounding and causes us to sweat. We feel this fear after we have escaped from an automobile accident, or when someone startles us in a quiet room. But there is also a subtle, insinuating fear that can pervade our lives. This fear comes at us not like a roaring lion, but as a coiled snake sitting in the corner of the room. This quiet fear travels with us day by day. It can rob us of freedom. It can choke our life.

So how can we discern whether this subtle, quiet fear is having an influence upon us? One way is to notice the things in our lives that we say we should do, but never get around to doing. We should recognize the things that we do not have the freedom to act upon. Because this failure to act is oftentimes the result of a fear that is under the surface, a quiet fear that undermines us.

### **1. Fear – Life situation**

Why have you not had that conversation with your spouse that you know you should have? It might be because of a fear that, if you start an honest discussion, larger issues would surface that would also have to be dealt with. Why have you not broken off a relationship that you know is unhealthy, perhaps even abusive, and moved on with your life? It might be because there is a fear that, if you end this relationship, you will live the rest of your life alone. Why is it that you do not speak what you feel, that you do not express what you need? It might be because there's a fear that really telling others who you are would somehow be disloyal to your family or the people you love. Why is it you don't take time for yourself but instead are always working and helping others? It might be because there is a fear that, if you stop doing, you will somehow lose your identity or your own value. Why is it that you do not commit yourself to a person that you know that you love, or to an opportunity that you know would be good for you to accept? It might be because of a fear that, in choosing this one person or this one opportunity, you must leave behind other possibilities without which you might be unhappy.

The Gospel of the Day is a clarion call by the Lord to ward off anxiety-causing fears and instead to be courageous in our life as a Christian. Our Blessed Lord gives His instructions to His Apostles as they are being commissioned for the mission journey. Today He touches upon one of the core emotions that can affect the Disciples in their mission endeavor: the emotion of Fear.

### **2. Not even one sparrow is forgotten before God. You are of more value than many sparrows”**

Jesus says, “Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows” (Mt 10:30). Jesus seeks to cast off fear from His followers by showing them the preciousness and value of their lives and how much of importance they are to Him. For

this, he presents the example of a sparrow. Though quite strange, Jesus probably had a very pertinent reason for this choice of the common sparrow. During the time of Jesus (unlike in many of our modern developed cities), sparrows were so common that they were practically worthless. Two sparrows were sold for a 'cent'. The word "cent" is the Greek word 'assarion'. An assarion was worth only 1/16 of a denarius. One denarius was the day's wage for a rural worker. So, by simple math, a single sparrow was worth only 1/32 of a day's wage of a rural worker. Another aspect to be noted is. In Mt, Jesus says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent?" (Mt 10: 29). In Lk, Jesus says, "Are not five sparrows sold for a two cents?" (Lk 12: 6). If two sparrows could be purchased for a cent, then a person should get only four sparrows for two cents. Then why the 'fifth' sparrow? Probably the fifth sparrow must have been an incentive offered by merchants to get people to buy more sparrows. The fifth sparrow was given, just merely to sweeten the deal! Our Blessed Lord used this practice of buy-four-get-one-free sparrows to illustrate how much God values life. He emphasizes and said that not even one sparrow is forgotten before God. Even a nearly worthless free sparrow is not overlooked by God. He takes immense interest even in an unappreciated bird! Therefore, Jesus says, "Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows" (Mt 10:30).

### **3. Fear – Jesus' invitation – Our response**

When we have a firm conviction of how precious we are to the Lord – Who is All-Powerful and All-Mighty – our every fear will be banished away! When we grow in our awareness that I am really very much worth to God – who is All-Knowing and All-Good – our every apprehension will be relaxed.

We are invited to grow in the Grace that Jesus has won for us, by His Death on the Cross – and by this Grace, to overcome all our fears of life, knowing that God is in total charge of my life. "For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many!"(Rom 5:15). Fear is one of the core emotions that can affect our life as a Christian: Fear takes an upper hand in many of our activities and renders us fragile. Fear has a strong grip over our minds and hearts in many situations and makes us weak. But the deeper we are convinced that I am precious and prized to the Lord, the lesser will be our fears! "What need I fear, when thou art near, O King of night and day" is a refrain from a Christian hymn! Yes, Fear can either prevent or propel, Prevent from moving forward, being afraid of what will happen, and Propel to have a stronger determination and rouse the enthusiasm levels.

Fear can either be a barrier or a boost: Barrier that does not allow any initiative to be taken or any thought-process to progress and boost that accelerates the resolve and willpower and helps march towards the goal

Are we going to let "fear" to PREVENT and act as a BARRIER in our lives? Or can we, convinced of the Lord's mighty presence in our lives and of our preciousness to Him, let "fear" to PROPEL AND BOOST our Christian Missionary lives.

“Perfect love drives out fear.” That saying is true. But the perfect love that removes fear from our life is not our love of God, but God’s continual, powerful, unyielding love for us.

**Let us pray:**

Lord Jesus, You know that we live in a crazy and chaotic world. You also know our struggles in our daily life. When life gets to be too much, please help us come to you. Calm our thoughts and emotions and open our hearts to your peace, comfort, and wisdom. Help us not to live in fear. Please reduce the feelings of fear and anxiety that plague us. Help us rest in You and trust You as we navigate through this broken world.

**Jesus, I Trust In You**