

HOMILY

“Fear no one” we just heard from Jesus in the Gospel. But we do fear many things and many people. We are intimidated by certain people; we are afraid of death, injury, loss of job, loss of our homes, loved ones, etc. The list of all our fears can go on forever. But today we hear, “fear no-one”. *“If this is so Jesus,”* we could say, *“you have to come and help me; I am so full of fears.”* Jesus wants to hear such a prayer from us. Jesus wants to hear this prayer from our hearts to his heart. When we make such a prayer from our hearts; when we realize that we are empty; when we realize only Jesus—and no one else, no other thing in life—can take away our fear, then Jesus comes. It is then we can say with the prophet Jeremiah, in the first reading today, “The Lord is with me like a dread warrior....” Jesus will have come and taken away our fear.

“...Nothing secret that will not become known.” Is the next point Jesus makes in today’s Gospel. This is both a comfort and warning: comfort in that all injustice against us will be brought out on the Day of judgment; but also a warning too in that all our acts of injustice against others will be revealed on that Day—so this is a motive for us to become small, trusting, childlike, humble before our loving God. There is nothing that attracts Jesus’ kind attention to us than a childlike trust in Him. All sin and unjust acts we are guilty of is wiped out by Jesus when He comes to a childlike heart.

Next we hear Jesus say, **“What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light.”** This translated is Jesus saying, *“Don’t keep the Good News, the Gospel to yourself. What you have learnt of me in the silence of prayer speak to others; share the good news of my Resurrection; tell of my mercy and love for the sinner”*. Sometimes we feel this is impossible, we feel this command is a real burden: but this is only because we are trying to be self-sufficient, independent, relying on ourselves and not on the power of God. Jesus wants us to place all our problems, fears, and worries in His hands—then He will amaze us by doing it all for us.

“...Fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell” Now—Jesus is reminding us of an invisible reality. Evil personified. The father of lies. We can be led into the wrong path by this invisible reality. A pathway that is death. A state where unbelief, cynicism, and a hardened heart is the result. On the Day of Judgement such a heart as this cannot accept God’s offer of love’s forgiveness. With this simple statement, Jesus is calling us to exercise what Sacred Scripture calls the “Fear of God”. This is another statement from Sacred Scripture that need further explanation: “fear of God” calls for respect, reverence and understanding of who and what God is. The first time we come to fear God we are fearful, respectful. But then—later—coming to truly know God is to fall in love with God who “first loved us”.

Finally Jesus lifts up our hearts with these words, **“...Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.”** “The greatest enemy of the spiritual life is fear”. That’s a statement from a monk who later became Cardinal of England: Basil Hume. He wasn’t referring to “Fear of God” which is a gift of God; he was referring to a crippling, cringing, anxious fear that sees God as one who is there to condemn us. Jesus doesn’t want that fear to be in our souls, minds, bodies and spirit. **“You are of more value than many sparrows.”** Does this not mean, we are valuable in the eyes of God; does it not mean we are precious in the eyes of God?

Prayer of the Faithful

Leader:

In gratitude we give thanks to the
Lord for opening our Churches.

LECTOR: **“Lord Jesus, Hear Our Prayer”**

As you bless us with eight young men to be ordained to the priesthood
next Saturday, June 27, we ask you to protect them and guide them:

We pray...

As you gather us around your altar after 13 weeks away from you,
we ask that you make us grateful for this mercy:

We pray...

As we observe all the restrictions placed on us for Mass, we ask you to
protect us from the virus and not let our community be the source of
another outbreak:

We pray...

As we gather today, many of our community are not able to be with us,
give them your blessing:

We pray...

As we remember at this altar your suffering, death and resurrection,
we ask that you renew us to live for others as you lived for us:

We pray...

Bring to our sick and shut-ins healing and new hope: (especially);

We pray...

Bless our dead (especially): those who have died from the virus;

We pray...

In our silence now, let the light of your presence shine in us (PAUSE):

We Pray...

Leader:

Holy Father,
your people are gathered once again
to give you glory through your only Son,
accept this our offering, and transform
us into that which is pleasing to you.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.