

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

“Don’t let worry kill you. Let the Church help.” ~ unedited version of a bulletin announcement.

Apparently worry is a huge thing out there. Many people are driven by fear, some cannot sleep or eat. I have heard that many young people are getting treatment for the hopelessness they feel around the climate. This constant doomsday prophesying is hurting us because it is a great evil to be driven by fear. Look at our Gospel today: the prediction of the end 2000 years ago. Here we are, 2000 years later, and someone is still trying to drive us by fear.

Many of us have lived through Y2K, the greatly feared turning of the century. There were dire predictions of power outages, food shortages, bank and financial institutions crashing and losing track of our money. They predicted that planes would simply fall out of the sky because their computers weren’t set up properly. People bought ammunition, generators, food, bottled water and bunkers. I remember the night it happened. Do know what happened? Nothing happened, except people who sold this stuff got rich. Bank machines did not spit out money, telephone lines did not go dead. Nothing happened. We were not one bit worse off than we were the day before. It was just a media hype. At that moment smart people would have simply stopped listening to those who were trying to control our lives by fear, so desperate are they to keep our attention. But no! We turned back to the god of the media and kept listening, kept waiting for the next thing to excite us into a frenzy and sure enough it came. What was it Ebola or the flu? Global warming, climate change are too boring to scare us so now it is climate catastrophe. In the Second Reading, we hear what people did when they were so scared that the world would end. They stopped working, they didn’t care.

This constant fear driving does this. And you know what, people are doing the same thing now, they have stopped working. The world is going to end and so who cares. Thank you media for your dire predictions that don’t ever seem to come true. Yet the predictions of God keep coming true. Sin and you will experience death. Do not follow the teachings of Christ and you will experience death here and death forever. Why don’t we listen to one who has never lied?

I am not saying that we don’t care about the planet but listening to the media will not help us because they tell us two opposing things. Don’t wreck the planet but buy as much as you can. Own more cars, bigger houses, become more selfish but shame on you if you don’t recycle. It is the same media that says not to abuse and objectify women but it is okay if we use them to sell you stuff and it is okay in movies that we show you that they are objects to be used but don’t do it. Don’t do what we show you how to do or we will shame you. They should, at the least, say at the end of each movie and commercial, “Don’t try this at home. These people are professional sinners and are on a closed circuit to hell.”

Aren’t we tired of being drive by fear, to have anxiety as a constant friend? Aren’t we tired of being told we are not good enough? Aren’t we tired of running around trying to find some satisfaction? When all we are is suffocated by our lives.

I had a weird dream awhile back. I was in Russia and I was hiding beside a railway track during a time of persecution. The track was on a steep embankment. The ground was covered in snow.

In my heart the fear was tangible, I could almost taste it. I kept burying myself deep in the snow bank, hoping terrified that I wouldn't be found. The snow was kind, it wasn't cold and seemed to cover me well but the fear was there and it ate my soul. Then I thought, "What if I didn't have fear, how would I live?" At that moment, I felt a great freedom from fear. My heart leaped up with joy. I dug myself out of the snow bank and walked joyfully down the road to whatever would happen. It didn't matter because I had love and it cast out fear.

Do you want this lack of fear? Do we want freedom? If so, then we must claim it. Claim it in our soul first by confession. Resolve to follow the way to live and ask for the grace. Claim it in our lives by rejecting fear in our lives. God is good and let us daily sing to that truth - God is good. God is our Father and climate catastrophe is not my god. The mainstream media is not a source of good news, the Bible is. I would be willing to stake my life on this truth. If you and I spent the same amount of time reading or listening to the Good News as to the news of the world, we would not be in the state we are in right now. We would do good because we would be surrounded by good and inspired by good. We would have a passion for good because we would know that God, the source of all good, has a passion for us. We would know the truth and it would set us free.

What are we going to do differently this year my friends? Advent is coming and it is time to pray for the grace to make real changes in our lives so we can really experience this Christmas the Prince of Peace and the real Saviour of the world. This Advent Tuesday to Friday we will have Adoration and Mass. Adoration starts at 6 pm. I will hear confessions during Adoration. At 7 pm there will be Mass. Each Thursday night in Advent, I will have a program on how to hear God's voice in your life and how to know what God is saying in your life. That will be after Mass. This Advent I want to die to this world of fear and live once again in the grace of God. I want to have Christ live in my life in a special way this Christmas. You are all welcome to join me. We could simply try harder but that doesn't work. If that was simply the case then we would have done it already. We need the power of God to cast out this fear and live the freedom Jesus has made us for.

I don't know about you, but I am sick of being driven by fear. I am sick of the enslavement it has brought and the joy it has stolen from my life. This year, I want to battle to bring and live the Good News. It is not too late, today is a new and awesome day. And though battles have been lost and the enemy has claimed much territory in the area of souls, the battle is not over nor is it time to run. It is time to stand in the Good News to claim our freedom.