

Rectoría San Juan de Dios
XII Sunday Ordinary Time-Cycle A
Jer 20, 10-13; Ps 69; Rm 5, 12-15; Mt 10, 26-33
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Let Us Live Without Fear

The words of Jesus, “*Do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul,*” more than being a consolation, teach us that we are the workmanship of God. The evildoers can end our physical life, but not the life of our soul.

How important it is to dare to live without fear as Jesus proposes today, and in a special way now, when we are experiencing exaggerated violence and insecurity in our society and when the destiny of humanity seems fragile and inconsistent.

It is very probable that Jesus said these words to encourage His disciples, those who would be frightened by having to face the leaders of the people for announcing the Jewish and Christian doctrine in a new and liberating form. And so the effect in them that Jesus wanted could have been the fearlessness to announce His Gospel and to give testimony with courage. Nevertheless, we meditate on this Gospel in a more universal way, not only as fear to proclaim Jesus but as a fundamental fear.

We know that fear is a natural dimension in our life, so let us distinguish three levels of fear. First, child-like fear. We overcome that when we discover that what frightened us was unreal, imaginary. On the second level are the real fears, when there are concrete threats that could harm us. We overcome these fears with our own efforts as established by our temperament and character, but above all, when the fears

are extreme, by trusting in God. The last type of fears are existential fears. These fears are manifested in anxiety, nausea, and a feeling of abandonment or loneliness. They arise from the atmosphere in which we live; they float in the air with a cry of doom. They also arise from the sense of emptiness generated by our nihilistic culture that pushes us to believe that nothing else exists, that there will be nothing else for us, and much less a future life. And from an atheistic and relativistic culture in which, if God does not exist, everything is permitted and we lose all order and natural relationship. In the end, one has the feeling that life is not worth living. These fears are overcome with greater effort, assuming a believing vision and commitment to those with whom we share our lives.

What is the greatest fear that you have suffered in your life? Let us bring it up right now, remembering the day. How long did it last—hours, days, or weeks? What were the surroundings like? Who or what was the threat? How was your breathing, the taste of anxiety in your mouth, the perspiration? And finally, how did you overcome it?

The key that Jesus gives us to living without fear is that there must be a fear that takes precedence, *the fear of God*. For whoever fears failing God, for whoever cares about his relationship with God, all the earthly fears are trivial.

To go on living without fear, let us try three attitudes:

1-Let us live our mission.

Like Jeremiah, let us overcome the fear of those who spy on us and try to trap us. Let us be sure that the Lord will shame our enemies. The mission that God gave to each of us is before and after any threat or adversity. If we remain firm in this mission to be fathers of a family, or in our working world, or in whatever we find as service to others, we will discover that the Lord is with our cause.

2-Let us live with grace.

We are not condemned to live under the influence of the sin of the first man, Adam; we live under the grace of Jesus. Through the life of grace that we live, our surroundings will enjoy the gift of God; with the Grace of Jesus that comes to us through the Sacraments, especially through the Eucharist and from our prayers and works of mercy, we will overcome any fear, sin, and death, and that is enough.

3-Let us live with courage.

This does not mean to live emboldened or defiant, but with the awareness that we are of great value; any adversity will be resolved because what we carry inside is much more important than the threats of the world.

We are worth more than all the birds in the world. And Jesus acknowledges us before His Father God if we acknowledge Him before men. But especially, we are of great worth because we carry something more profound than physical life—the life of the soul. In the consciousness of humanity, there are only two kinds of persons: the human person—us—and a divine person to whom we owe our existence. What does this mean? That we are made for God in a special way: we are distinguished from everything created; we are capable of dialoguing with God.

Do we not have sufficient strength to live without fear? This is the Good News: Let us live without fear!