

June 25, 2017

There was a pious little old lady in a small southern town, and she ran out of money to buy food, so with complete trust in God she got down on her knees and prayed "Dear Lord please send me a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal". Over and over and over she lifted up her voice and prayed out loud. One of the town's most disreputable characters overheard her prayers and decided to play a trick on her. So, he went down to the store and bought a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal. And he went up onto her house, and he dropped it down the chimney. It hit the ground right in front of her as she was praying. She jumped up praising God, and then she wanted to go around the neighborhood giving joy and praise to God to all of her neighbors. Look what God has done for me. The scoundrel was upset by her faith, so he decided to ridicule her in front of everybody. And he did. He went up to her and said, "I'm the one who bought the bacon and the corn meal for you, not God. She looked at him and she said, "The devil may have delivered it, but God sent it, Halleluiah!

And sometimes God uses bad people to bring about good. So always remember that.

One time they did a study on what we Americans fear the most. 51% of us are afraid of snakes. 40% of us are afraid of public speaking. 36% of us are afraid of heights. 34% of us are afraid of closed small spaces. 21% of us are afraid of needles and shots. And 18% of us are afraid of flying in airplanes. Jesus said today, "Do not be afraid", of anyone and open the gospel of anything, anything. A mother was tucking her small son to bed during a thunder storm. She was about to turn out the lights and leave the room when the toddler looked up at her and said, "Mommy would you sleep with me tonight"? The comforting mother gave her son a hug and said, "No son, you know I have to sleep with daddy tonight". After a long silence, the child said in a shaky voice, "Yes, Daddy really is a sissy isn't he".

Jesus gives us four types of things not to be afraid of, not to fear, we use the word afraid, he uses the word fear because the word fear can be translated in two ways. Fear being afraid but fear being respectful. He says first off, "Do not let them intimidate you. Do not let anyone make you afraid of saying you are a Catholic. Do not let anyone try and put you in your place because you are Catholic. If you don't know enough about your faith, about the theology, about the scriptures to discuss it with them then just just say, " That's it. You can talk with somebody else, but I'm leaving. But I will never be insulted or give up my Catholic faith". Don't ever not be proud of your faith. The saints may have given their lives, yes, because they did not let anyone intimidate them. We may not be called to give our lives up, but God says the same thing," Don't give up on Me. Because if you deny me, I will deny you. Give praise and glory to me in public, and I will give praise and glory to you in public. So, do not let them intimidate you". Our culture tries to intimidate us because we're Christian and not Muslims. Stop it! Don't let them do that. Do not let them intimidate you. He says, do not fear those who deprive the body of life, but who can't touch the soul. In our society today, we have gotten away from our focus, our primary focus of existence. That is for our mortal soul to go to heaven. We have to focus on our mortal soul. So, if we die, so much the better! So much the better. This earth's martyrs were willing to give their lives because they knew there was a better place. But everyone is afraid of dying. Everyone is afraid of what comes later. Everyone is afraid of leaving this world. Why? This world is horrible, ... and you want to stick around? That goes against all the teaching in the history of the church. Everybody wanted to die. They didn't want to ask God to die, it's a sin to say, "God take my life right now". But they were willing to look forward to their death. To make sure they were ready for their death. They

were not afraid of dying, because, as the Marines say, "They can only kill you once". And that's it, and then know you are in God's hands forever. And then Jesus says, "Don't be afraid of anything" Anything! Spiders, snakes, thunderstorms, deep water, whatever you're afraid of, Don't Be! Don't be afraid. This goes with dying as well. How many people are afraid of dying and then they say, "I just don't know who to leave my stuff to". They are worried about their stuff. Take a lesson, from my Mom. If you've given her anything in your life, she writes your name on the back of it. If you say, "Oh Mom, that's really beautiful", she gives it to you on the spot. And she says, "When I die, everybody's names on the back of what they are going to get back." My brothers and I cringe. We're the ones afraid. I'm going to get 500 cookbooks! Who cares. Your kids are going to survive. They don't need your junk. This one man I know, was so in love with his tools. He had a beautiful shop. He was meticulous about making things. When he died his kids took all his tools and threw them in the garbage. They didn't even sell them, just threw them in the garbage. That's what your kids think of your stuff. I can guarantee you this. I've seen it enough times.

Do not be afraid of anything. or anybody. We have Jesus Christ, we have the Holy Spirit, we have God the Father on our side, we have the blessed Mother and all the Saints. Why are we afraid? Why are we afraid of anything? Oh Father, well you know that Pope Francis, I'm afraid of what he's doing to the Church. Really... Have you read the history of the popes? Have you seen what some of the popes did earlier in the church? And what happened? The Church survived. Well Father, I'm worried about what the politicians are doing. Have we had politicians before? Yes. Has the country survived? Yes. Why are you worried? Do what you do your best as an American and move on, don't be afraid.

What Jesus says, Fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna". Some people say, "Well Father, is that the devil?" No, the devil can't do that. God the Father's the only one that has power to send us to hell based upon what we did on earth. God the Father can destroy soul and body. Who gave us the soul and the body? God the Father. So who has the right to destroy it? God the Father. So he says, "Fear him who can destroy body and soul". Is that the fear of being afraid? A little bit. A little bit. But mostly it's the fear of respect. This Guy has tremendous power. This Guy has phenomenal power. And you know what, if I'm the kind of person that that's what it takes to do good, fine. Make it more, fear, being afraid of than love and respect. If I'm the kind of person that, you know what, I didn't want my father displeased because I loved him, then that's a respectful fear. But He is the only one we have to worry about. So we live our lives concerned and respectful of what God the Father can do to us, based upon our lives. He says, "Do not be afraid". This is the most incredible statement. What happens when angels, bringing the power of God, show up in the Bible? What do they say? "Do not be afraid". God doesn't want us afraid of Him. God wants us to love him. To be glad that He's in our lives, to be glad that He's given us every breath we breath. Everything we have, comes directly and indirectly from God. He wants us to love Him, to thank him, to praise Him. Like the little old lady with the slab of bacon and the sack of corn meal. He wants us to praise Him. She got it indirectly from the devil, but ultimately it came from God. That's what Jesus is talking about. Do not be afraid.

There was a little Polish boy, born in Poland, right before World War II. His mother died when he was young. His father was a police officer, and, as a child, when he was growing up, his father became ill. The Nazis came over, and took over Poland. The Nazis had this game. There was a curfew. Anybody out after curfew was shot. They especially liked to target practice with little children. They kept a notch. They kept their marks, who could kill the most children. He had to run out at night, and try and get medicine for his father. Ultimately his father died, and he was all alone. And so he started looking. He

found friends in a drama company. The universities were closed, so they practiced underground. They had a literary club. They read, and they taught each other literature, underground because if the Nazis found out, they would all be shot. Gradually, as he got older, he started working in a quarry by day to hide the fact that he was in a university underground, a death sentence if the Nazis found out. Then one day the cardinal of Krakow came up and said, "You need to be a priest, I think you'd make a good priest". And he thought about it, and so he went to the cardinal and said, "Yes, your eminence, I think you're right." And he started studying, but there were no seminaries open. The Nazis had closed them. To be a Catholic was a death sentence. The whole people lived in fear, fear for their lives. This little boy didn't seem to have any. As he grew up into a young man he worked in the stone quarry, and studied to be a seminarian at night. Let me tell you, if I had to work like that and go to seminary, I wouldn't be here today because it's so difficult, but he survived. He became associate pastor. He drew youth like the piper of Hamelin. The Nazis were afraid of him, because whoever draws the youth, has the power. When he became pastor, the same thing happened. They watched him day in and day out. There was a security detail from the Polish secret police, watching him day and night. When he became a bishop, he needed to build a church for the expansive growth of Catholicism. Catholicism blossoms when we're oppressed. People still lived in fear, but they came out for their faith now. The Polish secret police and the communist weren't shooting them all completely yet. They said, "You can't build a new church". He built it, and dared them to tear it down. He'd been through so much he knew no fear anymore. And they made the most horrible decision ever in his life, they made him Pope, in charge of the whole world. When he came out the first time and introduced himself, and we found out that we had the first non-Italian pope in church history in 500 years, what were his first words? What were John Paul II's first words? "Do not be afraid"

He had known fear, he had concurred fear through his faith in our God. And if he doesn't know fear after what he's been through, why should we?

God bless you