



Bringing Home the Word

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time | June 25, 2017

Fear Not

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In the wake of natural disasters that devastate homes and lives or senseless and often intentional violence that leaves carnage behind, I am so deeply grateful that thousands of people find the grace to run toward the disaster to help, open hearts to pray and wallets to give, or just lend a shoulder to lean on or a hand to rebuild. The world calls it the triumph of the human spirit. I am convinced that it is grace abounding that God might work through each

person who builds, plants, comforts, and even dies so that others might live.

“Do not be afraid of those who can kill the body...” said Jesus, who knew that the path of discipleship would not be easy for those who followed him. He also knew that fear is a door through which evil can tempt believers to put their faith and trust in anything that can give them security, wealth, and power and, thus, turn them away from God. Those who kill others wantonly for the sake of their own gain, who oppress peoples to increase power, and who take advantage of misfortune to increase their wealth have succumbed to evil already.

“Do not be afraid,” Jesus says, because God watches over us and, in the words of the psalmist, “is our champion.” The people who run into burning buildings, spend precious time to help rebuild disaster areas and look for survivors, who stand in defiance of tyranny, oppression, and injustice, and who give what they have to help others know this and live it out already.

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Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 20:10–13

“Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD, for he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the evildoers!”

Romans 5:12–15

“If by that one person’s transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God...overflow for the many.”

Matthew 10:26–33

“And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”

A Word From Pope Francis

We have prayed under [Mary’s] leadership that she guide us to be ever more united to her Son, Jesus. We have brought her our joys and our suffering, our hopes and our struggles; we have invoked her by the beautiful title of *Salus Populi Romani*, imploring her [to] grant us health. Yes, because Mary gives us health, she is our health. Jesus Christ... has brought us salvation, granting us the grace and the joy of being children of God, to truly call him by the name of Father. Mary is the mother, and a mother worries... about the health of her children... What does this mean?...I think above all of three things: she helps us grow, to confront life, to be free.”

— Recital of the Holy Rosary, May 4, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What am I struggling with and need to give over to Christ?
- How can I increase my trust in God this week?



Hang on to Hope When the World Is Falling Apart

By Jim and Susan Vogt

It's easy for us to feel overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the many natural disasters, blatant injustices, and tragedies in our world. Are earthquakes, tsunamis, and droughts worse than in the past, or are we more aware of them due to modern communication? Injustices tear at our hearts the most since they are under human control. Terrorism, corrupt governments, oil spills, and pollution are mammoth problems of human making. Tragedies like death, divorce, or lingering illness can devastate us. We wonder: *How can God allow such suffering when we try so valiantly to do what's right and pray so hard?*

What's a Christian to do? Wallow in grief or guilt? Rail at God? Give up? Grieving is OK—for a time. Even getting angry at God is human. The psalms are good examples of people pouring out their grief and anger to God. (See Psalms 22, 55, 57, 88, 94, and 102 for a start.) Don't worry. God can handle our strong feelings.

There comes a time, however, when we have to pick ourselves up and carry on. The following actions have helped us when we've felt overwhelmed or powerless in the face of problems and evils in our world.

Cultivate gratitude: Let go of your anger through consciously noting one thing each day for which you're grateful.

Pray in solidarity: Of course we pray, both personally and at Mass, for people affected by natural disasters and tragedies of all kinds. Adding our bodies to our prayers through fasting or other sacrifices can build solidarity with the victims and reinforce our prayers.

Take action: Actions put feet on prayer. Can you take one action step in the direction of change? This won't solve the whole problem, but it gets you out of the starting gate.

Take on only what you can handle: When making even one step feels like too much, you might be right. Sometimes we're truly maxed out and have to trust others and God to take care of the current problem.

Think bigger: Those of us with just the ordinary demands on our time, energy, and money have the responsibility to think bigger. Consider that your strong emotion of anger or helplessness may be a call from God to act. You've been touched and moved.

Make a friend: Whatever problem is touching your heart, there are probably others who have organized a group that's already working on it. Besides, having others to work with is motivating and can refine bigger ideas.

What's Faith Got to Do with It? Jesus spent his life showing us how to deal with adversity and how to be neighbors. And what did it get him? Crucified! If we're following Jesus, we shouldn't expect comfort and ease;

rather, we need to spend ourselves for others and learn to love better. Jim McGinnis, a modern-day prophet and cofounder of the Institute for Peace and Justice, wrote: "In the face of escalating violence, let us escalate love."

QUESTIONS ONE?TION? REFLECTION

- What events in our world have angered you, upset you or made you feel powerless?
- How well have you done your part as a citizen of the world?
- What one action step will you take this month to work toward positive change where change is needed?

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Lord, your gift of unselfish love redeems the world. Remove the selfishness from my heart so I can love and care for others.

From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time: Weeks 11–22*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 26–July 1

Mon. Weekday:
Gn 12:1–9 / Mt 7:1–5


Tue. Weekday:
Gn 13:2, 5–18 / Mt 7:6, 12–14

Wed. St. Irenaeus:
Gn 15:1–12, 17–18 / Mt 7:15–20

Thur. Sts. Peter and Paul:
Acts 12:1–11 / 2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18 / Mt 16:13–19

Fri. Weekday:
Gn 17:1, 9–10, 15–22 / Mt 8:1–4

Sat. Weekday:
Gn 8:1–15 / Mt 8:5–17

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