

## Do Not Be Afraid

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In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, One God.  
Amen.

Fear is one of man's worst enemies. There is a natural fear that is born in creation, as an innate instinct. Anyone standing in the dark or in a startling situation, seeing some animal or creeping thing, may shudder or fear, and this is a natural reaction. This is part of humanity, and man, in response, will take on a "fight or flight" stance because survival instincts are ingrained in our creation.

However, Christ, to Him be all glory, in the Holy Bible tells us, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul" (Matt 10:28). He tells us also that they cannot do much more after that. That is their limit. Of course, the Church, from the beginning, has been in a state of persecution and tribulation, and when Satan is desperate, he kills, since from the beginning, he is a killer of men.

So, Christ, to Him be all glory, has guarded us from this terrible fear; the fear of wicked men. "And do not fear those who kill the body" (Matt 10:28).

Of course, ordinary words cannot easily remove the fear inside people suffering from it. Telling people simply not to be afraid, they will usually respond by saying that you do not understand what they are going through. Words alone are not enough of a comfort. However, the words of Christ our Saviour, to Him be all glory, when they are spoken to us, are life-giving and carry the weight of His Divine power.

So, if all the people in the world gathered to comfort me and encourage me not to be afraid, it is very different from when Christ, with His pure lips, speaks to me and says, "It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6:20).

So, in the moment that Christ reveals Himself to me, and with my acceptance of His Divine word to me, this terrible fear within me is dissipated. It is neither a psychological state nor an emotional comfort but rather a Divine power and a Divine Grace given in Christ Jesus our Lord.

When I hear this comfort from His Mouth, as He calls me by name and says, "Do not be afraid, I am with you," what can I say to that (love)?

When we hear such words from a man of high stature, we are assured; perhaps in a court case; if you had assurance from a minister or a

president or the like, saying, "Don't be afraid," you would sleep quite assured on his word.

Our faith in the person of Christ our Saviour is the core of our life. When He speaks, His promises are faithful and true. As He said, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt 10:30).

Are these just words? Perhaps said in the general sense? No, for Christ's words are spoken in a personal sense.

Indeed, He is the Saviour of the world, but for those who knew Christ, saw that He was their Saviour specifically. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). Yes, He loved the world, but when St. Paul became acquainted with the person of Christ, he said, "...the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Gal 2:20).

So, yes, indeed He loved the whole world, but His love and sacrifice on the Cross were very personal. He is my Saviour who loved me and gave up Himself for me. So, when He says, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt 10:30), I need to understand very well that these words are not a general reference or figure of speech, but it is the Truth itself. Can you imagine that our hairs are numbered individually?

I remember when Father Bishoy Kamel was unwell and began undergoing chemotherapy, it was quite uncommon and unknown at that time what the implications or side effects would be. When his hair began falling out, his wife Angel was quite disturbed and wept. He would say to her, "What is wrong? Every one of these hairs has been given permission, 'and not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will'" (Matt 10:29). So, he would tell her, "These hairs have fallen according to His will, not by circumstance or chance."

So, when Christ says this to one of us, and of course, He has said this to all of us, "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matt 10:30), there is no better assurance. For we are His children, bought at a price, not with silver or gold, but with His own Blood. Do you not know that you are precious to Him? You are so precious!

Sometimes we believe we are forgotten in this world, or in the Church; some say, "I come and go in the Church and the priest does not notice or even care." Don't worry about this. You enter and receive the Eucharist and are united to Him, so what is it that you are not acknowledged by others? It is not true that no one cares for us because our hairs are numbered and recorded.

Some might say aren't we just living out our days. But in fact, our names are written in the Kingdom of Heaven. Imagine if we truly understood and believed this matter, then everything in the world would be of no significance. Your name is written in Heaven, these are the words of Christ. That's why I'm telling you, when He said, "Do not fear," He expelled all fear within us.

So, it is a great shame then, to live our days in fear, whether from the future, or from disease, from wanting to protect oneself in every way possible. Fearing people, fearing persecution, fearing loss of job or income, fearing one thing or another.

How can life go on if we are excessively fearful, anxious, and worried, yet we are partaking of the Eucharist? Well, this is not possible. If I receive the Holy Body and Sacred Blood, and as He said, "...he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:57). Then fear has been expelled, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt 28:20).

His name is Emmanuel, which means God is with us, not simply by words, but by His true presence and in Truth. We are truly in His Presence when He is found as a living sacrifice on the altar. The more we live in this faith and commune with Him worthily, the more we experience the Divine reassurance which fills our entire existence.

Long ago, King David said, "...though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Ps 46:2), though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war may rise against me, in this I will be confident" (Ps 27:3). What mightiness this is, for he is not living by his own strength, but by Christ. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

If one lives in this way, what could he possibly fear? "And do not fear those who kill the body" (Matt 10:28). It is a great thing indeed to say to Him: since you have given me this promise, there is nothing in the world that can frighten me, and no one in the world that can disturb my peace.

During the reign of the Communist regime in Russia and the regions they had colonised, the rulers had forced nations into submission through violent and lethal means. These nations—Russia and Eastern Europe—were submissive only due to fear. Those who spoke would simply disappear. It was a time of imprisonment and a horrific regime that ruled by iron and fire. People were too fearful to speak. Those who were not fearful would die.

In one of the Eastern European nations—namely Poland—there was a Catholic monk who was not afraid. He was ordained Bishop over Poland, and he taught his people the absence of fear by true faith in Christ Jesus. He poured out his teachings for decades in direct opposition to fear. He did not directly oppose Communism, but he went to war against fear itself. He later became Pope John Paul II, the Patriarch and Pope of the Catholic Church.

He expelled fear from his congregation because of faith. These were very simple people in Poland who were under great burdens and persecutions and experiencing extremely desperate circumstances due to fear. So, when he strengthened his people by faith, he broke the pillars of communism. When he became the Patriarch and Pope of Rome, the days of the injustices of Communism ended at his hands.

Christ says that one needs to let his life settle into the words of eternal life in Christ Jesus. Jesus said, "Do not fear." There are many wars against inner peace and Satan is constantly disturbing us, but he who has a heart that is firm in Christ and says, "My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast" (Ps 57:7), nothing at all can shake him.

There is a divine promise that says, "For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from you, nor shall My covenant of peace be removed," says the Lord, who has mercy on you (Is 54:10). So, He says the mountains will pass away, but My peace will never pass away. How great!

Fear is terrible. It is directly opposed to faith. Fear is directly opposed to total reliance on God. Fear is evidence that man is not completely confident in Christ. If you are certain of the Lord's promises, then do not fear.

Do you not know that you are in the perfect and complete care of God? Do you not know that His eye is on you personally? Of course, we have all experienced this: is it possible for fear to enter the heart of a child who is held in the arms of his father?

We were once children, then we became parents with children of our own, and we have seen this in all people. Once the father carries his child, he will never fear, but if he is alone, running around, he can feel afraid. In the embrace of his father, he can never experience fear.

So, stay always in the protection of His embrace. In prayer, say that I'm enjoying an immense grace, for I'm in my Father's embrace. What fear? That of Satan? There is so much talk of Satan, but while you are under the protection of your Father, there can be no Satan. How about fear from people? This is my dad!

Well, He said, "...My sheep... shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:28).

My brethren, we have an amazing grace; please live it! An amazing grace indeed. The grace of full reliance on God and dependence on the mighty hand of Christ. So do not fear! Indeed! It is very, very true indeed. We have an amazing grace of the mighty hand of God which parted the Red Sea. A very mighty hand! You are carried upon the arms of the Divine.

What is the greatest cause of fear in the world? It is death. The thing that causes the greatest fear in humanity is death itself. What about the fact that Christ has broken and conquered death, and He raised both you and I in His nature, when He said, "I am the resurrection" (John 11:25), "O death, where is your sting?" (1 Cor 15:55). True Christians do not fear death.

I have visited many people on their deathbed, and I found them joyfully saying, "I am not afraid of death." It's a beautiful thing. A person is dying, and

the doctors and all the people around them are saying so and weeping, but he or she would ask to sit with me for a few moments and would admit to me, saying, “I am not afraid of death; I am joyful that I am going to be with Jesus.” This is a truth that every Christian should be living—do not fear!

Darkness equals fear, but what about the Light? Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12); the true light (John 1:9). The true light is within you, and there is no place for darkness. The resurrection and eternal life are within us, so there is no fear of death. “And do not fear those who kill the body” (Matt 10:28).

Of course, as much as one lives a life of prayer and unity with God and confesses his/her sins so that there is nothing buried inside to cause him/her fear, since sin gives birth to fear internally from every confrontation. Like a student who has failed, and his report is all zeros, so that he is afraid of facing his father. But a high-achieving student races home to tell his family his results. So, sin gives rise to fear and to death, but you have within you the True Light, such that darkness will disappear. Within you is the hope of everlasting life, so do not fear death.

May God give us His grace and complete His work within us and bestow upon all His children the blessing of His peace and assurance which cannot be shaken.

To our Lord be the glory forever and unto eternity. Amen.