

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 26, 2017

The gospel tells us today to fear no one. Pretty easy to say if you're under the gun and the hard knocks of life are hitting pretty hard. These words can seem pretty shallow and empty. We are afraid of a lot of things. In fact, it is important that we be afraid of legitimate danger so that we can protect ourselves and be safe.

Nevertheless, Jesus says to us today to fear no one. Do not be afraid. Last Friday was the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our parish feast day. The heart of Jesus, the essence of God, the core of our Creator, is his Sacred Heart. Artists depict the Sacred Heart as pierced with a sword and surrounded with a crown of thorns while at the same time emanating flames of fire. The sacrificial infinite love of God for us is dramatically illustrated in his Sacred Heart. It is here that we find solid reason to not be afraid, no matter what it is in life that threatens us.

We fret and agitate about a lot of things. We are worried that we will not have enough money to meet our obligations and to live with a reasonable amount of comfort and security. We worry about being taken advantage of, were afraid of being cheated, we fret about failure or being embarrassed or rejected or alone. Our guard is up that we not be exploited or taken advantage of. We are afraid of being hurt or wounded. We are afraid of suffering. We are afraid of getting sick and we're afraid of death.

Two of the stained-glass windows in our church show the Sacred Heart. I invite you to look more closely at these windows and let the warm light that comes from them help salve your wounds and diminish your fears.

The first reading is from the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah is one of the most wretched figures in all of Scripture. He was very upright and wanted to do what is good. But he was reduced to absolutely nothing. He was thrown into the pit. The pit was an abandoned cistern, or a failed open water well. Here is where everyone threw their garbage and their sewage. Rats and snakes live there. That is where they lowered Jeremiah, deep down into the muck of the pit. That is where we hear the words, out of the depths I cry to you Lord, Lord hear my voice.

If you feel that you have been lowered down into the pit, it is to you that the gospel speaks, be not afraid. It is to you that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is given, to rescue you from discouragement and lift you up into hope and joy in spite of all the threatens you.

“Learn a lesson from the way the wildflowers grow. They do not work... But not even Solomon in all his glory is arrayed like one of these. Mt 6: 19-34