

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Twelfth Sunday
Ordinary Time

Gospel Word
Matthew 10:26-30

This is “do not fear” week. Papal commentators said that the late Pope John Paul II often said, “Do not fear.” There are even T-shirts with his picture that say that. But if the truth be told, he wasn’t the first to warn about the dangers of excessive fear. It was Jesus. In fact, biblical scholars tell us that this admonition is the most common one uttered in the New Testament.

Those were fearful times. People had an undeveloped understanding of nature, so they feared the storms. They also failed to understand illness and disease. Filled with unknowns, they could easily live in terror of their world. Yet even today, people are pulled down by fear. So the message to quench fear is a valid one? Not entirely. There are always dangers aplenty. Do not overly fear the unknown, because fear can paralyze us so much that we don’t experience the freedom and joy God desires us to have.

Living the Word

It is necessary for us to sort out the difference between what’s to be feared in reality, and what’s not. Assess your own fears. Our culture contains many exaggerated potential enemies. We all need to make a list of what we fear, and then do a calm evaluation of what’s worth our fear-energy and what’s not. Then, like Jesus, seek to mitigate the damage or restrict the power of unnecessary fears.

Prayer

Dear Lord: Protect me. Keep me safe from harm. Bring me the peace of mind that comes from trusting you to care for me always. Amen.