

The Resourceful Nun

In California Unleaded gas went to \$4.00 a gallon last Thursday. Sister Mary Ann, who worked for a home health agency, was out making her rounds visiting homebound patients when she ran out of gas. Fortunately, an Exxon station was just a block away. She walked to the station to borrow a gas can and buy some gas. The attendant told her that the only gas can he owned had been loaned out, but she could wait until it was returned.

Since Sister Mary Ann was on the way to see a patient, she decided not to wait, and walked back to her car. She looked for something in her car that she could fill with gas, and spotted the bedpan she was taking to the patient.

Always resourceful, Sister Mary Ann carried the bedpan to the station, filled it with gasoline, and carried the full bedpan back to her car.

As she was pouring the gas into her tank, two Baptist ladies watched from across the street. One of them turned to the other and said, 'If it starts, I'm turning Catholic.'

Laborers into the Harvest - Have No Fear

Matthew 10:26-33

June 25, 2023

“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.”

In last week's Gospel, Jesus told his disciples that He was sending them out as sheep amidst wolves and that rejection and persecution were inevitable because He himself was often rejected, and would eventually be crucified, by the people, especially their leaders. Jesus' warnings understandable made the disciples fearful. But Jesus answered their fears with assurances of his promise.

Jesus told his disciples to have no fear because of the promise that all that had previously been “covered” or “hidden” would be “revealed” or made “known” He told them that He was going to use them to carry out this ministry of Gospel by revealing the good news of the kingdom to them “in the dark” intending for them to

speaking those truths “in the light”. Jesus would teach them the good news of the gospel, and they, in turn, would then “proclaim it on the housetops.”

Jesus is eternal, always faithful, never changing – He is the Light of the world. He is the fulfillment of all God’s promises from the Old Testament, both to Israel and to his people at the ends of the world.

When we evangelize others, by teaching and preaching the Word of God as revealed in Jesus to them, we are continuing Jesus’ ministry of making the good news known to them. We shine the light on their need to turn to God through Jesus Christ their Savior.

Jesus told his disciples not to fear others in positions of power because their power and authority are limited, while God’s is limitless. Jesus was not making light of the grievous nature of bodily death in the here and now, especially that of persecution. Rather, Jesus was showing that those in power over us in this life do not have ultimate rule or authority over our bodies and they have zero rule over our souls.

FEAR OF THE DARK (AND SLEEP PARALYSIS):

During a sleep paralysis episode, a person is aware of their surroundings but cannot move or speak. But the person can still move their eyes and breathe. Many people hear or see things that aren’t there (hallucinations), making episodes even more frightening. These episodes may last anywhere from a few seconds to a few minutes.

The brain prevents muscles in our limbs from moving to protect us from acting out dreams and hurting ourselves. Sleep paralysis happens when you regain awareness going into or coming out of REM. I have personally experienced such episodes and so carried a fear of the dark from childhood through my 30s.

In the early 1980s, when I finally found out what was happening during these episodes, I changed my night prayers and sleep patterns and these episodes disappeared. Now, one of my favorite hymns is “What You Hear In The Dark’.

Jesus called the disciples to have courage and believe in him. His healing, preaching, and teaching were all geared toward the downtrodden and the less fortunate. He taught them (and us) that the only thing we must fear ultimately is God himself, because God alone has the authority to “destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Jesus was not calling his disciples to cower in fear before God but to live with hope and in peace because of Divine authority. If we have a proper fear of God then we can carry Jesus’ mission with us with courage, knowing that Jesus, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, will be with us in the face of trials, hardships, persecutions, and even death.

He told his disciples to have no fear because of their standing as sons of God in Him. No sparrow falls from the ground apart from God's will. He's attentively sovereign over people as well, knowing the number of hairs on their heads – some of us more than others. If God is concerned about lowly sparrows and hair (though for some of us a little more than others), how much more concern and love does God have for the souls of his people as their Father in heaven. We are of so much more worth to God than sparrows.

God's love is sure for all who believe in Jesus because God's love for Jesus is eternal. Jesus will acknowledge us before God if we believe in Him. And we can stand before God with hope and peace, knowing that God loves us because we are united with Jesus through faith. If Jesus acknowledges us before God, then we can, must, and will acknowledge Jesus before others. If we deny him before others, He will deny us before God.

How many times have we denied Jesus before our families, our neighbors, our coworkers, our community? Will Jesus deny us before God because of these transgressions? There is ALWAYS forgiveness through Jesus, our Redeemer.

How does Jesus' acknowledging us before God affect my daily life? In what ways do I strive to acknowledge him in my home, my neighborhood, my church, my community? How can I grow in boldly acknowledging him before others and gain a place in God's kingdom - **to boldly go where many have gone before!**

Amen!

Deacon Gregory J Cecere

June 25, 2023