

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jan 14th 2015

The reading from Hebrews reminds us that Jesus has come to free us from the fear of death and from the slavery of fear. I need to hear that Good News, because I sometimes fear that my children will not find the meaning and joy I have found in my Catholic faith, that I am not a good enough spouse, and that I am somehow not enough in my current position. I know that I need to let go of my fear and rest in the redemption of Jesus who became like me and us in every way. Yet I hang on to my fears and am tested by them. I believe that God's invitation to me and to us in Jesus is to live in the freedom of God's gift of mercy, redemption, and love. For some reason I forget that God, who remembers his covenant always and who spelled out his covenant of love in Jesus, wants us to be free of fear and the slavery of fear.

I find that when I am fearful I am less grateful and that I am less open to options. I don't see as clearly when I am fearful, and I don't find the grace and the presence of God that are available in each moment if I am aware of God with me. That is who Jesus is, God with us, and so I need to be reminded and continue in awareness that Jesus is always Immanuel – not just at Christmas. Of course, Advent and Christmas are a special reminder of God's covenant and on-going love for all of us, but God is with us at all times; God is with us in our rising, and in our sleeping, when we fall down in sin, and when we rise with the grace of forgiveness, when we laugh with joy and when we cry in sorrow. In our busy days and our busy lives, we need that balm from Gilead to heal our fearful, sin-sick souls. Only the love and grace of God can truly heal us, fill us with what we most need, and make us whole.

Just as Jesus healed Simon Peter's mother in law and all the sick that were brought to him from the city, so we can be healed. If we let him, Jesus can drive out our fear and free us from the slavery we sometimes choose in our lives. May we all find ways to go away to a quiet place, like Jesus did, and sit in silent prayer so that we can listen in the silence of our hearts to what God is saying to us. This is life giving truth, so that we can find our true selves and our way in Christ Jesus. If we listen, reflect, and then act, maybe we can hear who we truly are before God and then go and carry that Good News to others. We believe in a God who saves, a God who wants us to love each other, and a God who calls us to witness love and redemption in our lives. This is why we were created.

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