
19 Friday

FRIDAY, 28th Week in Ordinary Time

Eph 1: 11 - 14

Ps 32: 1-2,4-5,12-13

Luke 12: 1 - 7

Sometimes St Luke's gospel gives you a surprise shock, a sudden contradiction of what you might have expected: Jesus saying He came to bring not peace but a sword, fire on the earth, Jesus (in Luke) shows us an image of God as a caring father, concerned even about the smallest of life's details --- sparrows, or the hairs of our heads. "Don't be afraid", He says. Yet almost in the same breath we hear Him saying: "I shall show you whom to fear.... the one who after killing has the power to cast into Gehenna: yes I tell you, be afraid of that one". Is it not the same God and Father ?

When Jesus says that secrets will be known, that our whispers will be broadcast from the rooftops, doesn't it frighten or disturb us ? Isn't it natural to be afraid of being hurt or having to suffer, or even being killed ? People are afraid of many things, and many lives are paralysed by fear. Meanwhile, throughout the scriptures, old and new testaments, "Don't be afraid" is one of the most common messages, from the Lord God, from angels and messengers, and from Jesus Himself. It seems we constantly need to hear it, to be assured that God does care.

"Don't be afraid": it's a matter of trust, trust in someone whom we know loves us, like a child holding its father's hand while crossing a road. Such a trust leaves no room for fear. But it also carries a deep loving respect for the One who values us so highly, a "fear" that our weakness might forfeit His love.

Text wordcount: 274