



DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2020

Readings: Luke 12:1-34 (especially verses 4-7)

"We all know we are in a pandemic. You would have to be asleep at the level of Rip Van Winkle not to know that! But there is more than one pandemic we are fighting. Of course, we are struggling with COVID-19. That's the pandemic we all know. But there is also a pandemic of fear. Fear has always been an experience common to the human race, but now I find it everywhere and at higher levels.

The last time I remember fear at this level was the Cuban Missile Crisis. Everyone was talking about it and the television news (in black and white) was fixated on what turned out to be the closest we came to a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. I was in grammar school at the time, and we had drills where we crawled under our desks for "protection. Mom and Dad talked in hushed tones about whether our basement would serve as a bomb shelter (both "remedies" rather silly). As a child I found those days both exciting and rather frightening. Today, I look back on what I now know and still breathe a sigh of grateful relief. We dodged a cataclysmic bullet.

I wonder if, years from now, we will look back on these days and see some of our behavior as rather silly, while at the same time breathing a sigh of deep relief.

In Luke 12:4-7, Jesus puts fear in perspective. The Christian life is not a life without fear, but it is a calling to a life with a proper placement of fear. We are called not to fear those who can "kill the body," but Him who has "authority to cast into hell." Jesus seems to be telling His followers there are things worse than death.

The Christian, who understands that his or her own death is in the Lord's hands, has no ultimate fear of it. The Christian does, however, have a healthy fear of the Lord and His Judgment. Judgment is far worse than death itself. When the Christian is captured by the grace of God and realizes that he or she has been spared by God's mercy in Christ, the fear of death (as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:55) loses its "sting."

As our culture transitions from a nominally Christian culture to a secular culture to a pagan culture, the fear of death will rise exponentially. Any threat to human life becomes the dominating force of all decision-making, pushing society to one extreme or another. The Christian, however, need not follow this terrifying yo-yo. We can be assured by our Lord's words: "Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows."

– Fr. Marc



Lord Jesus, be mindful of your promise. Think of us, your servants, and when we shall depart, speak to our spirits these loving words: "Today you shall be with me in joy." O Lord Jesus Christ, remember us, your servants who trust in you, when our tongues cannot speak, when the sight of our eyes fails, and when our ears are stopped. Let our spirits always rejoice in you and be joyful about our salvation, which you, through your death, have purchased for us. Amen. (For Joy at the End of Life, Miles Coverdale, ACNA Book of Common Prayer, page 678)