

Fear God and fear being apart from God!

What are **some of the things** you're afraid of?

Survey results come out from time to time that list the **Top 10 Fears of People**.

One recent list included the following things: **Fear of ...**

1. Public Speaking
2. Heights
3. Going to the Dentist
4. Snakes
5. Flying
6. Spiders
7. Enclosed spaces
8. Mice
9. Dogs
10. Thunder Storms

Can you identify with **any** of these things?

Are **you** afraid of **public speaking**?

All I know is that **my Parking Place sign** says **if you park there** you have to give the homily the following week and **so far** not one person has parked there!

Are **you** afraid of **heights ... spiders ... enclosed places**?

All of us have **certain things** that we fear ... but **what I find surprising** is that...
I've never heard anyone ... in any of these Surveys say that:

They have a fear of **God ... or even** that...
they have a fear of **being apart from God!**

How about you? Do **you** have a **fear of God**?

For **those of you** who've received the **Sacrament of Confirmation** ...
you've received the **full outpouring** of the Holy Spirit, which included **7 Gifts**.

And **one of those Gifts** was "*The Fear of the Lord*"!

Coming from the **Holy Spirit** of God ... makes **this gift ... a holy Gift!**

We call it **Holy Fear** ... and we describe it as ...
having **wonder and awe** for the **might and majesty and mystery of God**

so hopefully you have a **Holy Fear of God** ...
and **hopefully** it would be in the Top Ten List of your fears!

This was certainly on **Blessed Mother Mary's List** as we heard her mention it in her **prayer of praise to God** in our **Responsorial Psalm** taken from Luke's Gospel.

Mary declared, "*The Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation.*"

So being afraid of God is not something to be embarrassed about!
Rather, being afraid of God is a holy thing ...
It opens the door for God's mercy to flow into our souls!

How about this fear ...
Do you have a fear ... of being apart from God?

From what you know about God being Love, Peace, Truth, Beauty & Goodness
does **the thought of ... being apart from all of that ... make you afraid?**

It should! Oh what a loss that would be ... to be without ...
Love, Peace, Truth, Beauty & Goodness.

So hopefully **the fear of being apart from God** would also be on your List of fears.

This fear would also be a holy thing!

For this fear would move you to take action to be sure that you never suffered separation from God ... which only happens when we sin.

Sin harms our relationship with God ...
Either wounding it or breaking it
thereby separating us from a full and life-giving union with God.

In our **First Reading**, the **Prophet Isaiah** speaks of his life-giving union with God
... saying that **he rejoiced heartily because**
he felt clothed in a robe of salvation
and wrapped in a mantle of justice.

In his 1st letter to the **Thessalonians**, **St. Paul** tells us,
"*Test everything; retain what is good.*" **And** "*Refrain from every kind of evil.*"

By this **he's saying that we need to avoid doing anything** that could separate us from experiencing ... the love of God.

Paul says, “*be preserved blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Ten days from today, we’ll celebrate *the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!*

The question is ... *Are you blameless for that celebration?*

As **Christians**, our **intention** is to follow Jesus every day ... but in our humanness we often stumble and fall short of doing what He would have us do.

It’s **then that we need to come right back to Him to the Sacrament of Confession and restore our relationship with Him as soon as possible.**

We’ll offer that opportunity this Thursday from 5–8 PM at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. I encourage all of you to take advantage of the Mercy of God.

As Mary said, “*He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation!*”

It’s **in Confession** that we hear the words, “*Your sins are forgiven; go in peace!*”

This **soothing affirmation** enables us to pick ourselves up after we’ve fallen in sin. It restores our dignity and infuses us with the desire to want to cling to the holy union we have with God.

Through Confession, we become rehabilitated.

We receive not only God’s forgiveness ... but also God’s Supernatural grace ... that gives us **new vigor** and a **new conviction** for living the Christian life.

Through **all four** of our Readings this day, we hear the same message ...

Isaiah ... St. Paul ... Mary and John the Baptist ...

are all calling us to make straight the way of the Lord.

And an effective way to do this ... is to embrace ... Holy Fear ...

... the Fear of God ... and the Fear of being apart from God!

As we continue to celebrate the final days of Advent ...

take time to contemplate the things that you’re afraid of ...

and recognize that neither the embarrassment of Public Speaking,

nor the itch of a Spider Bite ... nor the pain of Dental work ...

comes close to the horror ... of being apart from God forever.

That is something to fear!

So through our prayers and good works, let’s strive to stay close to Him every day and make straight our way ... to the Lord!