

Fr. John Sassani
Homily Given June 22, 2008
Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Liturgical Year A

Three times in eight verses, Jesus prohibits fear. He must know that we are a fearful people. Think of who and what provokes fear in you. Dentists, terrorists, bigots...chronic illness, loss of independence, poverty at the end of my life... Some fears are rational, and some are irrational. Either way, when I give into them, I'm handing my personal power over to them.

Once in this Gospel, Jesus advocates fear. Fear the one who can destroy body and soul in hell - that would be God. Jesus worked hard to dispel this; he regularly brings it up. What is "the fear of God"? It is awe, that God is God. It is handing power over my life over to God - not from intimidation, but from trust.

I think often of the providence of God. God finds a way to find us. God isn't arbitrary, not does God guarantee that *our* ideas about life are best for us. God calls us to trust *him* - and that, even in adversity, he will be with us to guide and direct us. But - we must cede authority over to God - we must fear the Lord.

Christ is for us the human example and divine source of fear of the Lord. He trusts even in great adversity. At the crucifixion, he says, "Into your hands, I commend my spirit." The tragic culmination of his suffering leads to the providential new beginning. That attitude of mind and heart is available to us in the Eucharist. Let us eat and drink of Christ and his trust in the Father, so that we might grow in trust.