

## 12<sup>th</sup> Week of Ordinary Time

So – what are you afraid of?

Dark Snakes Clowns Heights

There are lots of things to be afraid of

Business trip to Chicago – left the Conference Ctr to walk to my hotel

Gang of teens come walking toward me – its dark, I'm alone

They get closer, taking up the whole sidewalk, then one reaches out to me

Hands me a bible tract – they'd come from church and were sent to share WOG

In today's Gospel Jesus says – don't fear what can hurt the body, fear what hurts the soul

- the teens didn't want to hurt me, but I didn't know that.

There ARE things I should fear – snarling dog, rattle snake

Fear is an emotion God gives us to protect us

Jesus is saying healthy fear - righteous fear – is fear that protects the soul

1<sup>st</sup> Reading from JER is a great example

JER – prophet against sin – people didn't obey – people hated him

“I hear terror on every side.

Those who were my friends watch for any misstep of mine.

Perhaps he'll be trapped, then we can have our vengeance on him”

**He had reason to be afraid – but what comes next**

“BUT the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion

Sing to the Lord, Praise His name”

Jeremiah confirms what Jesus taught – fear what can harm the soul, not the body.

So what can harm the soul – 7 deadly sins (7 Capital Vices):

**Lust, greed, gluttony, envy, pride, anger, sloth**

How do we combat them? 7 Capital Virtues:

**Chastity, generosity, temperance, kindness, humility, meekness, diligence**

God doesn't leave us unarmed – each virtue defeats corresponding vice

Humility v Pride

Kindness v Envy

Diligence v Sloth

Temperance v Gluttony

Chastity v Lust

Generosity v Greed

Meekness v Anger

What vices are part of your life? What sins do we confess over and over?

THAT is what we should fear -

BUT remember JER, while we may fear the vices in our life – we are not alone

God is with us, and we are blessed with virtues to combat the vices

Athletes exercise to strengthen their muscles

Spiritually, we can exercise the vice muscles or the virtue muscles -

Whatever we exercise gets stronger

If your issue is Anger-Meekness Lust-Chastity Greed-Generosity

Good is always going to be attacked by evil – be good anyway.

Be good Parents, Children, Managers, Employees, Husbands, Wives

Despite the vices of the world – despite what evil throws at you

Be good anyway – we CAN do that - God is with us.