

Fear Not

Easier said than done. There is so much to be afraid of today: war; the loss of life and the devastation caused by it; unemployment and poverty; illness and the pain and diminishment that often accompany it; the threat of ecological collapse; to say nothing of personal anxiety and trauma. The readings for this Sunday all speak of the hardships that loom over every life.

But these hardships are not the last word. Jeremiah ends his announcement of gloom on a positive note: “Praise the LORD, / For he has rescued the life of the poor / from the power of the evildoers!” (Jeremiah 20:13). The psalm of lament picks up the same message: “the LORD hears the poor” (Psalm 69:34).

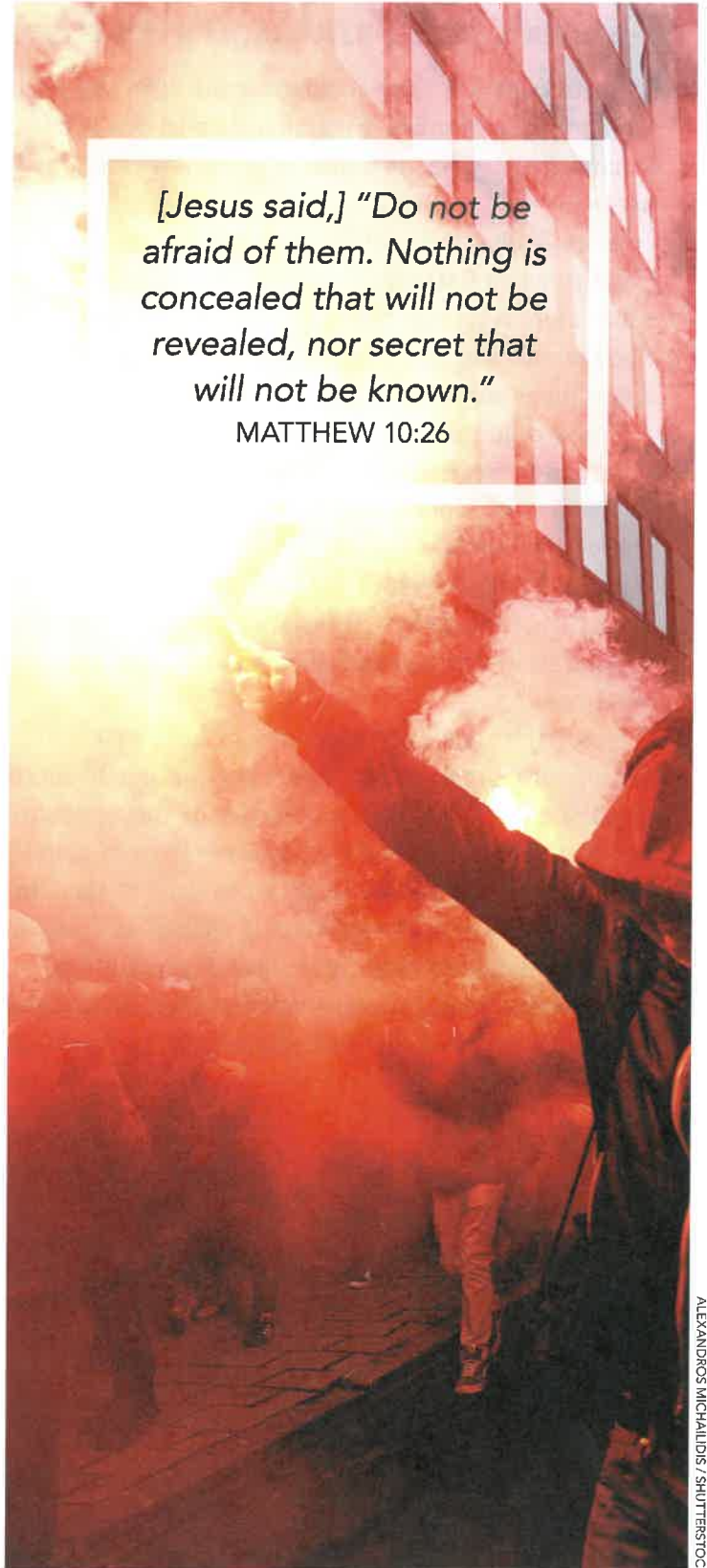
Saint Paul insists that sin and death don’t win: “...How much more did the grace of God...overflow for the many” (Romans 5:15). Caught in the throes of misfortune, people cry out—but God responds.

It is in the Gospel that the reassurance of God’s care unfolds. The struggles described there are real, but they will not last. The imagery employed to characterize God’s care is picturesque and extraordinarily tender. If God is attentive to the lowly sparrows, how much more will God be attentive to us? Even more personally, God knows us so well that the very hairs on our head are counted. The admonition here is clear: Never fear! If catastrophes threaten, don’t be afraid! Even if they engulf you or carry you away, don’t be afraid. It is only temporary. God is always there, attentive to our needs, so fear not!

—Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

FOR *Reflection*

- * *What societal situation frightens you most? Here is where you might pray for trust in God’s loving care.*
- * *What might you do to change, even so slightly, what frightens you?*



[Jesus said,] “Do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known.”

MATTHEW 10:26

Dear Padre,

Why does the Church oppose stem-cell research, especially when it has the potential to cure illnesses like Parkinson's disease?

Stem cells are unspecialized cells with the ability to divide and produce a variety of more specialized cells. Scientists hope that one day they can be coaxed into specific kinds of cells that can cure disease or repair diseased organs.

In its 2008 statement On Embryonic Stem Cell Research, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops noted that there are two kinds of stem cells. Adult stem cells come from umbilical cord blood, adult tissue, and placenta. The bishops say they “can be obtained without harm to the donor and without any ethical problem.”

Embryonic stem cells, on the other hand, are obtained by destroying embryonic human beings in the first days of development. Since harvesting these cells involves the deliberate killing of humans, obtaining or using this kind of cell is immoral. This is why the Church has opposed extending federally funded stem-cell research beyond currently existing cell lines.

Although stem-cell research may hold vast therapeutic potential, it's never permissible to sacrifice a human being for the good of others. The bishops clarify the moral hazards when they say, “The same ethic that justifies taking some lives to help the patient with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease today can be used to sacrifice that very patient tomorrow, if his or her survival is viewed as disadvantageous to other human beings considered more deserving or productive.”

Catholics should support further research on adult stem cells, which show great promise, and resist efforts to expand research using embryonic cells.

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ELENA PAVLOVICH / SHUTTERSTOCK



A WORD FROM *Pope Francis*

There is a tendency to justify transgressing all boundaries when experimentation is carried out on living human embryos. We forget that the inalienable worth of a human being transcends his or her degree of development. In the same way, when technology disregards the great ethical principles, it ends up considering any practice whatsoever as licit.

—LAUDATO SI', MAY 24, 2015

Calendar

Monday

JUNE 22

Weekday

2 Kgs 17:5–8,

13–15a, 18

Mt 7:1–5

Tuesday

JUNE 23

Weekday

2 Kgs 19:9b–11,

14–21, 31–35a, 36

Mt 7:6, 12–14

Wednesday

JUNE 24

Nativity of

St. John the Baptist

Is 49:1–6

Acts 13:22–26

Lk 1:57–66, 80

Thursday

JUNE 25

Weekday

2 Kgs 24:8–17

Mt 7:21–29

Friday

JUNE 26

Weekday

2 Kgs 25:1–12

Mt 8:1–4

Saturday

JUNE 27

Weekday

Lam 2:2, 10–14,

18–19

Mt 8:5–17

Sunday

JUNE 28

Thirteenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time

2 Kgs 4:8–11, 14–16a

Rom 6:3–4, 8–11

Mt 10:37–42