



St. Matthew the Apostle Church
335 Dover Chester Road
Randolph, NJ 07869

September 11, 2020

Dear Parish Family,

Each week as I start thinking about what I am going to write, I always wait until the last minute. It has nothing to do with laziness or anything like that, but sometimes I allow something that has occurred in the past few days to shape where these letters come from. While I had a direction for this week, I was still waiting for that one thing that might hopefully shape things better. Whether it is good fortune/fate or the Spirit active in the world, what I was searching for has taken shape.

FEAR, is something that drives us at times. We all have things of which we are terrified. Even though we may recognize the irrationality of fear, we still, at times, succumb to fear. I for one am terrified of bees. No matter how often I tell myself to ignore them, I have an irrational fear of flying things that sting. To this day, when I am in a dark basement and turn off the lights, I go running up the stairs out of fear of who knows what! We live with fears and try our best to conquer them. Whatever the fear - bees, wasps, mice, spiders, clowns, mimes, etc., there is that one thing that will be in our heads, no matter how old and smart we are.

Last night, I was watching an old episode of Doctor Who. The episode, *Listen*, is about fear. It primarily addresses the fear of when you are alone, in the dark, or awakened by strange noises in the middle of the night. If we let fear rule who we are, we can never be that person we have been called to be. One of the characters, Clara at the end of the episode says, "I know you're afraid, but being afraid is alright, because didn't anyone ever tell you fear is a super power. Fear can make you faster and cleverer and stronger and one day, you're going to come back to this barn and on that day, you're going to be very afraid indeed. But that's OK, because if you're very wise and very strong, fear doesn't have to make you cruel or cowardly. Fear can make you kind."

Fear can make you kind, fear allows us to realize our own weaknesses, but know that He is with us always. To quote a lyric from the song "For the Lamb" by Elevation Worship, "For the Lamb has overcome, Everlasting love has won, In eternal praise we will lift Him up, For the Lamb has overcome the world". If we set our eyes on Him, knowing Christ's sacrifice for us, we know that even in our own fears, He is with us.

I have written about fear before. It is good to hear about it periodically, because in this world fear sells. It is what keeps us watching the news or clicking on online articles. No one

wants to click on the stories of a good neighbor or student, we click on the trumped up articles that fear-monger.

Trust in God, keep your eyes focused upon Him. Know that He will always be there for you. He answers our call and prayers. Instead of living in fear, live in Faith. Come to Mass or watch it. Hear His word. Go out and do what you can to help others as we have been called to do. Do not let fear rule you. Never forget Christ's death has overcome the evil in the world.

God Bless,
Fr. Brian