

Thoughts from the Deacon

July 7 Tuesday 14th Week of Ordinary Time

My brothers and sisters in Christ, turbulent times continue in our society. The evil one, Satan, appears to be gaining the upper hand. I strongly recommend everyone participate in ***Let Freedom Ring: 40 Days to Freedom from the Devil***. It is a Novena started by U.S. Grace Force. See web page; <https://usgraceforce.com/let-freedom-ring-40-days-to-freedom-from-the-devil/>. It runs from today July 7 - August 15, 2020. It involves prayer, fasting and even exercise for reparation for all the evils in the country. Please see the website for explanation of the novena and today's prayers.

Keep in mind July 16 after 6pm Mass, Thursday, Columbus Fatima will be at St. Mary to give their presentation on Fatima, and devotion to Sacred Heart. There will be a potluck. Come and learn about the relevance of this Church approved apparition for our time.

This weekend also begins the BAA campaign. Everyone should have received a letter introducing the campaign. Collection envelopes will be available in the Churches. I realize that many are feeling the pinch of the Covid shutdowns. Our capital expenditures for the year include: new roof and wall repair at St Ann, replacing bell speakers at St Ann, repointing the exterior walls at St Marys, and refurbishing the storm windows at both Churches for energy savings. Prayerfully consider sharing your treasures.

Novena Day 1

Let Freedom Ring: Freedom from Fear

By Fr. Bill Peckman

In the Garden of Eden, the Devil tempts Adam and Eve. He lies to them. His lie is effective because it taps into fear. The fear is simple: God does not want what is good for you. The Devil sells a fear to Adam and Eve that God wishes them to be perpetually ignorant of good and evil (even though they already knew the good), that they are missing out without that knowledge. Fear finds its roots in a disbelief in God's providence and care. God knows this and in the Scriptures He tells us 365 times to not be afraid. Overcoming fear is trusting in God.

Fear rules our nation now. It used to be that the American Dream was the ability to act rightly and freely and set one's course independent of one's socioeconomic status. In the last 100 years the American Dream transformed into accumulation of possessions and status. Now the American dream had turned into a nightmare of anarchy by which the dream is complete autonomy and self-determination independent of God, science, or reason. The fear comes from a belief that this life is all that there is and we must create a reality conducive to my personal truth. Anyone who challenges this is to be feared and despised.

Fear rules within most churches now. Fear has reduced the evangelical call of the Great Commission to a call for the comfortable and non-challenging. It has stilled out tongues on moral issues. It has gutted our catechesis. It has emptied our seminaries and decimated the priesthood. Being Catholic has always carried a stigma in this country. With the scandals in the Church, fear of being accused of things one would never do is a strong deterrent to answering God's call. It was for me. When the purveyors of fear have raised their voices, in fear we Catholics have allowed ours to be silenced. A fearful person who will not stand up against the lies of a human being will never stand up to the lies perpetrated by the father of lies, the Devil. We would do well to heed Jesus's rebuke of His apostles in Mathew 8:26, "Why are you fearful, ye of little faith?" He says this as they are being tossed on the sea by a strong storm.

It might be said that courage is the virtue to cultivate to fight fear. It goes deeper. The virtue to cultivate is the theological virtue of faith. To countermand the Devil's use of fear, in

believing that God does not want what is good for us or will abandon us if we follow Him, we must cultivate faith so as to be able and willing to put our trust in His goodness and plan.

Because it is a theological virtue, the virtue only grows with the assistance of the grace of God. We will not be able to cultivate faith without the sacramental life of the Church. Even when circumstance prevents our participation in the sacramental life of the Church, the fervent desire to participate in the sacramental life of the Church allows that opening for God to flood us with the grace to grow our faith. Such desire has aided the imprisoned, the ill, and the exile.

Faith must lead to conversion. If not, then the grace of God is squandered. We shall have to answer for this. Conversion is an outward and inward sign of the trust we faith we have in God. Conversion sets the devil on his heels. It calls out his lie. Faith will lead us to a place where we can stand out against the rising tide and fight against the diabolical. Dead men flow downstream, weak men float downstream, but live men can walk against the current and move forward. Faith is the powertrain to give us such abilities.

Prayer of Reparation

My Lord and my God,

We have allowed the temptation of the devil to move our hearts to doubt in your goodness.

We have still our tongues in the face of evil.

We have been too fearful to stand out in our culture, allowing the strong storms to quell our trust in you.

In our fear, we have allowed the ancient foe to advance.

We turn to you Lord, in our sorrow and guilt, and beg your forgiveness for our fear and timidity.

We beg for the grace of your goodness to build up within us what you sought to build up in your apostles in that tempest tossed boat.

We know, Lord, if you will it, it will be done.

Trusting in you, we offer our prayer to you who live and reign forever.

Amen

Prayer of Exorcism

Lord God of Heaven and Earth,

In your power and goodness, you created all things.

You set a path for us to walk on and a way to an eternal relationship.

By the strength of your arm and Word of your mouth

Cast from your Holy Church every fearful deceit of the Devil

Drive from us manifestations of the demonic that oppress us and beckon us to faithlessness and fear.

Still the lying tongue of the devil and his forces so that we may act freely and faithfully to your will.

Send your holy angels to cast out all influence that the demonic entities in charge of fear have planted in your church.

Free us, our families, our parish, our diocese, and our country from all trickery and deceit perpetrated by the Devil and his hellish legions.

Trusting in your goodness Lord,

We know if you will it, it will be done in unity with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever.

Amen.

Litany of Humility

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart,

Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,

Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire of being loved,

Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled,

etc.

From the desire of being honored,

From the desire of being praised,

From the desire of being preferred to others,

From the desire of being consulted,

From the desire of being approved,

From the fear of being humiliated,

From the fear of being despised,

From the fear of suffering rebukes,

From the fear of being calumniated,

From the fear of being forgotten,

From the fear of being ridiculed,

From the fear of being wronged,

From the fear of being suspected,

That others may be loved more than I,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others may increase
and I may decrease,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and I go unnoticed,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me in everything,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I,

provided that I may become as holy as I should,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.