

Thoughts from the Rectory ...

Dear friends of St. John the Evangelist,

“Say to those whose hearts are frightened: Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; with divine recompense he comes to save you!” These are most welcome words to hear right at the outset as we begin the Liturgy of the Word in the celebration of the Mass. So poignantly and providentially are do they come to us this weekend. “Be strong, fear not”!

From the anxieties felt across our lands with Hurricane Henri in the Northeast to Hurricane Ida on the Gulf Coast; from the fires in forested mountain lakes, to the earthquakes on sea-enclosed islands. From the worries of variants and concerns about expirations. From the tragedies of fleeing Afghans and the grief of military moms, dads, and veterans alike. From all the anxieties we have felt over the past few weeks alone, there is much to fear.

As much as there is for us to fear, there is so much to entrust in the power of the Lord. “Be strong, fear not! Here is your God, he comes with vindication!” the Prophet Isaiah is called to exclaim to the people of God. The threat of evil appears to ensnare us, yet the power of faith and prayer affirms to encourage us. “Here is your God”.

In faithful prayer and sacramental action, that is, the capacity for us to be in communion with God, we may learn of Him, hear His voice, and be confirmed in peace. As the world turns, the Cross stands firm.¹ In Christ, who suffered and died for us, calls us to ever live with Him.

Faith and trust leads us to know not fear, but to live in courage.

There is much for which we are called to pray. The Lord instructs the Prophet Isaiah to lead His people in prayer. The Lord instructs each of us to lead His people in prayer. In our own communion and in our own prayer, God gives us the words and actions to lead those whom we meet to peace, to trust, to courage, to hope. Do not be afraid to pray! Do not be afraid to trust! Do not be afraid to lead your families, friends, strangers and neighbors alike to be women and men of faith, hope, and courage in love!

St. John the Evangelist, pray for us!

Fr. Pierz

As we pray together for an increase of hope and trust, please remember those suffering today due to natural disaster, political turmoil, illness of body or soul, abuse in all its forms, especially the most vulnerable. Please also pray for the Church that she may always respond lovingly, faithfully, honestly, and promptly. I ask that you remember finally the Task Force on the diocesan Response to Allegations of Sexual Abuse on which I have been asked to serve these past few years with our completed report soon to be published this week. In all our efforts as men and women of God, may we always authentically, lovingly, and courageously face the tragedies that too often surround us.

¹ *Stat crux dum volvitur orbis* (The Order of Carthusians, St. Bruno Great Charterhouse)