

♪♪ Nada te turbe, nada t'espante, quien a Dios tiene, nada le falta!
Nada te turbe, nada t'espante, Solo Dios basta! ♪♪

Let nothing disturb you or trouble you, let nothing frighten you.

The one who hold on to God lacks nothing.

Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, God alone is enough!

The words are from St. Teresa of Avila. "Basta" is the same in Spanish and Italian.



48 years ago, next Wednesday, August 26, I was ordained at St. Mary's Church in Hudson, where I grew up. The next day I celebrated my first Mass on the 21st Sunday of Ordinary time, A cycle, using the same Gospel & the same reading from St. Paul that we heard today. I've been thinking of how my life & ministry has unfolded since then. I was reading the words of the homily at my first Mass, given by a Friar who was my teacher & later, my friend.

I laughed out loud when I remembered these words: *"Why was Peter chosen? Out of all the people of Hudson, why is he standing before us today? Why is any one of us chosen to do anything in this world?"* then my friend, Fr. Anthony, said, *"Well, if you want the answer to that you will have to go to the second reading, the short little passage from the letter to the Romans. And the answer is"WHO KNOWS?"* My family almost fell out the pew laughing, and are not shy about reminding me of it. I can remember that moment as if it were yesterday.

Do you remember the 2nd reading for today? *"Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been God's counselor? Or who has given the Lord anything that they may be repaid?"* The message is as clear today as it was then: Everything is a gift. Everything is a grace. Both the call and the power to live it come from God. God alone is enough.

St. Peter experienced that many times as he travelled with Jesus. When he stepped out of the boat, and began to sink; when he didn't have the courage to admit he knew Jesus in the temple court; when Jesus asked his disciples in today's Gospel, *"Who do **you** say that I am?"*

In the Gospel for today, he was given the grace to answer, *"You are the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."* Jesus made it clear that it was not by his own intelligence or courage that he was able to answer that question, it was the grace of God. Then Jesus changed his name from Simon to Peter - the rock, but the foundation of the community that grew out of that small band of disciples was not so much one flawed person or even the group of imperfect men & women who followed him in Israel.

The rock was the solid faith that Peter spoke and lived, a faith that was shared by women & men from then until this day in 2020. We sang that truth in the opening Hymn: "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ, her Lord". It is that faith that Jesus said the jaws of death could not overcome. That tells me that not even death will be able to overcome our faith.

In our own time we can feel very troubled and disturbed and afraid. But the promise remains - neither pandemic, nor politics, nor systemic prejudice nor frightening violence can prevail against our faith. The one who trusts in God, who holds on to faith lacks nothing. When our own power, our own science our own resources are not enough, we are reminded - as Peter and his companions were over and over and over - "*solo Dios basta*," God alone is enough.

We live in a time of chaos and uncertainty. Death is all around us, whether caused by disease or systemic injustice or environmental disaster. When we plan, even for the immediate future, things change. I think of a phrase I often use, "We plan, God laughs."

More than ever, we need to remember the last verse of today's Gospel: Jesus reminds his followers then and now that he is going to suffer and die - after being unjustly condemned. But that is not the end of the story - it's a part of the pattern of living & dying that ends in resurrection from the dead - the Pascal pattern.

That resurrection is for us too, not just at the end of our earthly lives, but many times over the course of our days. We went through that paschal pattern when we were enjoying a beautiful summer in 2011 before Hurricane Irene came to town. And, by serving each other in so many ways, and believing that we could rise again, this village was reborn - experiencing a resurrection from disaster.

The son of one of my college classmates came close to despair when he was unjustly fired from his teaching job because of a false accusation. I was on the phone with him for many hours when his whole life was falling apart & he had lost everything & had to move back in with his parents at the age of 45. He is being helped by the teacher's union & a lawyer who is suing for defamation of character. However, both cases have dragged on for years. But just this past week, he called me with news of new light on his horizon. He said he was beginning to look long term at the rest of his life and he asked me about Franciscan Mission Service. He was thinking about going overseas as a lay person to serve the poor.



Then he told me that his brother had recently asked him to tutor his niece who is going into 2nd grade this year - because he and his wife were not ready to send her to school in person. He may even be able to do this for other families.

He is feeling hope for a new resurrection, but he would never have made it through the past few years without the support of his parents, family & friends. He would not have survived without a solid foundation of faith, & a deep well of hope even when everything was falling apart. The Gospel message is that light is stronger than darkness, faith & love are stronger than death and the Love of God is enough.

But we need to open ourselves to the grace that God offers. We need to let go of having to have our way and controlling the world around us. Then we can stand secure on that rock of truth & love. Once we, like Peter, know who Jesus is for us - as individuals and as a church - we can begin again to live his love and truth and go through the endless cycle of dying and rising with joy and peace. How do we find our way through the troubles of today? Each of us has to do it in our own way, but the prayer attributed to St. Francis can provide a map or GPS. It is a very simple call, but impossible to live without the grace of God at work within us.



Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much
seek to be consoled, as to console,
To be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

[I found that prayer in its original language, Italian and was surprised that it had 2 more phrases: Where there is division, let me sow unity; Where there is error, truth]

I would like to conclude with one more song, one which I learned from Greg Artzner & Terry Leonino, otherwise known as Magpie. This is what I hear the Spirit of God calling us to do here and now:

♪ Live like a prayer now, deep in your hearts.
Live like a prayer now, 'cause we are all a part.
Live like a prayer now, if we want to survive.
We are, we are all alive. ♪

This is the link to the video of this Mass on the Facebook Page of Our Lady of the Valley parish in Middleburgh. It is also on my Facebook page and the Page of Franciscan Ministry of the Word at Bethany Ministries.

<https://www.facebook.com/OurLadyoftheValleyParish/?rf=111852915517194>

Conclusion of Prayer of the Faithful

O God, who live and reign in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, you are love; you are peace. Give us the grace to be prophets of your mercy, reconciliation and peace in a divided world, a divided nation, and a divided Church, and to promote that communion in diversity which bears the imprint of your own divine life.

