

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

There is no fear in love. God is love. Inasmuch as you are reconciled to God, you have nothing to fear. In these turbulent times, times when our television screens are filled with violence and looting and cities afire, there is great comfort in the Words of the Beloved Disciple: There is no fear in love.

Joseph, son of David, was confused and afraid when he learned that the Virgin Mary was with child. The angel appeared to him and said “Do not be afraid.” The disciples were afraid when they saw the Lord walking on the water. He said to them “Do not be afraid.” Peter, James and John fell on their faces in fear and trembling when confronted with the Theophany of the Mount of Transfiguration. The Lord came and touched them and said “Do not be afraid.”

The women who came to the tomb in the shadows of the morning were frightened. The guards trembled at the sight of the angel and became as dead men. But the angel said to the women “Do not be afraid.” Soon after the risen Lord Himself appeared to them and said “Do not be afraid.” In Corinth the ascended Lord appeared to Paul in a dream and said to him “Do not be afraid.” Christ is Love Incarnate. There is no fear in Love.

The fallen world doesn't know true love. The love the world knows is barter for advantage or material gain or power. So the fallen world trades in fear –epidemics, broken families, prejudice, hatred, division, pride, crime, drugs, perversity, abortion, gender confusion. These are all of sin. Sin leads to death. So there is fear in the fallen world. But the world does not fear the one thing that can hurt it most – separation from God and the only true faith. For in this is there eternal death.

Thus false teaching and wrong belief about God should be feared above all else. So the Lord taught “...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” So the world fears that which need not be feared, while having no fear of the one thing that brings destruction and eternal death.

There is no fear in love. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

What St. Paul writes about love, what St. John writes about love, is not a description of the perverse twisting of love that the fallen world knows. It is not simply a warming emotion or a filial affection or an erotic attraction. When the Apostles write of love, they write of Christ. Hear again the Words of St. John: “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Consider the Apostle Paul's description of love in light of Christ crucified: He suffers long and is kind. He does not envy, He does not parade Himself, He is not puffed up, He does not behave rudely, He does not seek His own, He is not provoked, He thinks no evil, He does not rejoice in iniquity. He shows His love for you, perfect love, in willingly enduring what you fear most – death. In love, in perfect love, He died for you, in your stead.

It is Love, Love Incarnate, that overcomes your sins. The transgressions and wrong doing that separates you from God is forgiven in Christ. His love is victorious over your sin. His love is victorious over your death.

By the new birth the Lord of the Church promised Nicodemus, you too are born – of water and Word, from sin unto righteousness, from death unto life, from discord and transgression to Communion with God. God shows His love to you by making you His child, by giving you His Kingdom. Believing, the love of God fills you as His Spirit makes His dwelling in you. And so you need not be afraid. You are reconciled to God. Although your body may sleep, you will not die.

So you may have boldness in the day of judgment, being made perfect in love. By grace, through the faith given you, by the Spirit working through the Word of God, you confess God aright. And by that confession, God's love is made manifest in you.

God loves you. His love for you is shown in concrete, external means – in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. And the love of God, the visible Gospel, comes to you this day in the Holy Eucharist. The Lord who gave His Body and Blood for you bids you eat and drink.

In love He feeds you the medicine of immortality. He forgives your sins. His love fills you. You are one with the Holy Christian Church, One with God, One with one another, one in forgiveness, one in love. So do not fear, dear Christian. For there is no fear in love.

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