

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Joseph, son of David do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”
(Matthew 1: 21)

Listen to what the angel says to Mary and to Joseph. The words are the same: “Have no fear, Mary.” “Have no fear Joseph.” When the messenger who comes from God arrives only a few words are spoken. They must be very important words, most germane to the situation at hand. God must know how ready-to-hand fear is in the human heart. The angels brings a calm, a serenity, a sense of appropriateness. That serenity displaces fear in the heart of Mary and Joseph. It is that way with us too. How often do we act out of fear? How many of our choices are rooted in being afraid, whether we realize it or not?

I have spoken with women and with men who have told me that they got married because they were afraid not to, afraid that they would be alone for the rest of their lives, afraid that no one would have them, no one would love them. I have known people who quit a job out of fear and others who were afraid to let go of the security of the job they had although they felt the pull to launch out on their own. I have counseled a number of women and men who confessed the sin of abortion and fear was a major player in their decision. Sometimes it was the fear that their sexual activity would be found out or the fear of what family or others might say. Sometimes it was the fear of not being able to cope with another child at the time or the fear of losing a potential spouse if the pregnancy were discovered.

I know parents who are over-protective of their kids because they are afraid of what they might get into, or kids who are afraid of losing mom or dad or afraid of not receiving enough of their attention and thus, act out. How much of our anger is rooted in fear? It might be the fear of being rejected or not belonging or not being appreciated. How much of our ambition or drive is rooted in fear, the fear of not having or not having enough? How much does fear influence so many of our decisions even our voting decisions?

The angel says simply: “Do not be afraid.” Do not let yourself surrender to the fear. How can I not? By making a simple choice to trust in God’s presence and support no matter what the situation or circumstances. But there is also a part of me that believes Mary can resist the fear and Joseph can resist the fear because both are loved by each other and by the Lord. Mary loves Joseph. Joseph loves Mary. God loves them both. Love casts out fear. God is love. God casts out fear. Without God in my life on a daily basis, I will be much more likely to live out of my fears. The choice rests with each of us. Do we realize that it must be decided on a daily basis? That is the question of the week.