

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

June 25, 2023 • 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Matthew 10:26-33

The Gift of Faith

Before the apostles leave to begin ministering in the world, Jesus warns them that there will be people who will hate them and try to hurt them. He tells them to fear no one, and reminds them that God is aware even of a fallen sparrow.

I want my children to share my faith. Not because they will be damned if they don't, but because faith can get them through pretty much anything. When you are certain that God is not just with you but in you and believe you are taking the Spirit in with every breath, you can't help but feel invincible in a healthy, non-destructive sort of way.

I'm not saying you can leap from rooftops or stop a bullet in midair, but with faith in an ever-loving God, it is easier to feel like you can face any obstacle or enemy and know you are going to be okay. Consider the early martyrs who walked into amphitheaters singing hymns, ready for death, or modern martyrs who worked with the poor in developing countries and were shot to death for their efforts.

Understand I am not saying they didn't feel fear when they saw the lions or faced the gunmen. I am saying they could breathe in the Spirit of strength and courage and know that ultimately they would be fine. Death is not the end. They were invincible, and would live forever in God.

Witness this kind of faith to your children. Try this little exercise with them when they are hurt or afraid. Hold their hands and teach them to take in slow, deep breaths. Ask them to picture themselves breathing in God's strong, all-powerful Spirit, breathing in God's strength and courage. Ask them to consider their situation and decide what the worst thing that can happen is. Remind them that

no matter how things turn out, God will always be with them; God is always in them.

In this world of escalating fear and uncertainty, you will be teaching them a life skill that will help them cope with whatever the future may bring.

FAMILY RESPONSE

You don't have to be facing a particular hurt or fear to practice praying with every breath. Ask everyone to hold hands, close their eyes, and picture a thick silver fog in front of them. Tell them the fog is the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of strength and courage. Slowly breathe the Spirit in and out. Remind them that Jesus said he would be with us forever. End with an Our Father.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Try the breathing prayer yourself. Think of something you are worried or concerned about. Write down how you felt before, during, and after the prayer. What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?