

FR ALAN'S REFLECTION

FEAR OR TRUST?

One day there was a plane which encountered a lot of turbulence on one of its trips. Many passengers were in a state of alarm. However, in the front of the plane there was a little girl who seemed to be perfectly happy. She was reading her book. Her world seemed to be in completely good order. This had been noticed by one of the passengers who met this little girl as they got off the plane. He asked why she did not seem to be worried by the turbulence? She said, 'my dad is the pilot and I always knew he would get us home.'

A few weeks ago, I mentioned that the beginning and the end of Matthew's Gospel emphasizes that God is always with us. This theme is continued in this Sunday's First Reading and Gospel. In the First Reading the prophet Jeremiah is being persecuted because he spoke prophetically to his people. Despite his feelings of isolation, Jeremiah was able to say with confidence, 'But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero;' Similarly Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." Jesus assures us that when we seek to do what is right, we are not alone.

We can carry several fears in our lives – fear of failure, fear of financial or material insecurity, fear of disappointing others, fear of being rejected by others, fear of being alone, fear of being insignificant. Whatever our fears are they prevent us from being able to live a peaceful life. Ultimately our fears come from our inability to leave ourselves completely in the hands of God.

How do we get to the point where we can trust God beyond our fears? The answer is through prayer. St Francis De Sales once said, 'Anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall a soul, except sin. God commands you to pray but he forbids you to worry.' When we are tempted to give in to fear we ask God how do you want me to proceed and then we wait. The challenge this week is to 1: Face our fears 2: Bring them to God. 3: Ask God what we should do. 4: Wait and trust him.

The little girl in the story had complete trust in her pilot dad. Do we have enough trust in God? God is not physically present, but his presence is real for those who trust in him. What we need is the confidence of the prophet Jeremiah, who despite the troubles he encountered, continued to commit his cause to the Lord.

God cares enough to keep watch over us. Do we care enough about God to place our trust in him?