

## Homily—12<sup>th</sup> Sunday OT; B-cycle

God is in control. That is the message behind our readings today.

In all things in all circumstances God is in control.

So if God is in control, we have nothing to we need to be afraid of.

Yeah, yeah Father, you've sung this song before, but there IS stuff to be afraid of.

There are diseases out there to be afraid of.

We got crazy Moslem terrorists chopping off the heads of Christians in other parts of the world, and they're gunning for US. THAT'S something to be afraid of!

The country's deficit is so astronomical now who KNOWS what's going to happen to the economy when THIS bottom falls out!

And I know people who have been looking for a job for YEARS, and can't find one.

How can you possibly say there's nothing to be afraid of?

I didn't say there wasn't scary stuff going on out there, just that we don't need to be afraid of the scary stuff out there. When we do we get afraid?

We get afraid when we feel we've lost control of the circumstances that surround our lives, or that control is threatened.

Or, we get afraid when we feel that we are in some way inadequate to a task that's before us. These are the surface reasons why we fear things.

But the big, underlying reason we get afraid is because we don't trust God.

We lose sight of the big picture, and the big picture is, everything we suffer here is adding to our eternal glory later.

The big picture is that God's goal is to get us all to heaven, where life really begins.

This life we're accustomed to is only the warm up, the prelude to something much better waiting for us.

And when we lose sight of that, when we forget that, when we stop believing that, we begin to fear, because we've taken our eyes off of God and put them on the world.

This is what Saint Paul is getting at in our second reading; *"He indeed died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised. Consequently, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh."*

What is Paul saying? The whole game has changed now.

Because of what Christ did, in attaining for us an eternal inheritance, we now have to train ourselves to stop looking at our surroundings with worldly eyes, but try to see everything as building up our spirits for the next life.

And this by the way is the answer to the question, if God loves us why does he allow bad things to happen? This is what God is explaining to Job in our first reading. Job is a wealthy man and a righteous man, and loses all his wealth in a single day. Then he loses his health and is disfigured with a disease.

And then his friends arrive to try to help him figure out what happened. But instead of helping him, they keep badgering Job into trying to admit to some sin, because God wouldn't have let this happen if you didn't do anything wrong. So Job's friends are only aggravating him, not helping him.

And at first Job accepts his condition with great faith, but as it keeps wearing on him he get's more and more angry, and yet, he continually examines his conscience also. "Have I ever looked lustfully at a young woman? No. Have I ever cheated anyone? No. "Have I ever failed in charity in some way to the poor? No."

So even Job is stuck in this mentality that God should only let good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.

And then Job finally makes his mistake. He says "If I can only confront God face to face, I can prove that I'm right and he's wrong!" And that's when God steps in. And God basically says to him, "you're not seeing the big picture. The world doesn't fit into this nice neat little box you've made in your mind.

"You told your friends you had faith in me. You said you believed in me, but you really don't trust me now, do you Job?" And we cannot love God until we trust him 1<sup>st</sup> .

God ends up restoring all Job lost and more, but Job's real reward is that through his suffering, he now has a wisdom about the nature of God he didn't have before.

If good things only happened to good people and bad things only happened to bad people, how would that ever require faith? Faith is our ability to trust God.

Faith enables us to see that God is in control even when everything seems out of control. And faith is a constant challenge because fear is constantly present.

Let's face it, we're all afraid of something, even me. I'm anxious about lots of things.

I get anxious about our debts, the sale of the excess properties, Mass attendance, the rise of atheism and secularism in our society. I worry about the school!

I worry about enrollment every year and how much we can afford to give out in financial Aid, and who's going to get a bigger piece of that pie, and who isn't.

I worry about charter schools and how they may put us out of business.

All these things I lose sleep over. I preached a funeral last Saturday for a young woman who died tragically at 18 years old, and I agonized over that homily.

How am I possibly going to communicate the mercy of God in this?

How am I possibly going to offer any comfort to the family in this?

I was anxious over that even though in all my 18 years of priesthood with all the tragic situations I've had to deal with, God has never, never, NEVER let me down.

And he didn't last Saturday either. The words came. Why was I afraid?

I was afraid because my faith is weak, because my trust is weak, because my love is weak. That's MY sin. So don't feel bad. I struggle with it too.

Fear is a powerful force to overcome but we still have to fight with ourselves to overcome it.

And that does NOT mean saying, "Oh, OK, God is in control, so I don't have to do anything." No. That's a cop out. That isn't faith. That's using faith as an excuse. Faith and love always motivate us to action, not inaction.

So when we see the poor we don't say, "OK, God is in control. He'll take care of them."

No. When you see the poor YOU act. When you see a need YOU act.

When we hear people knocking Church teaching we don't say, "OK, God is control. He has to teach them otherwise." No. YOU speak up. YOU teach. YOU correct.

Faith and love motivate us to act because to act takes trust.

Our Patron, Pope John Paul once said, "Those who sincerely say 'Jesus I trust in you' will find comfort in all their anxieties and fears."

I would submit today that we all say this, "Jesus I trust in you," everyday, until our hearts truly embrace that God is in control.

Blessed be God forever.