



Boston Catholic Journal

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"There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love."

1 St. John 4.18



Bogeymen, Bastards, and Dreams in the Dark

Fear ...

The Bogeyman of our lives. It has dogged us, pursued us, relentlessly followed us no matter where we have gone, no matter what we have done to avoid its menacing shadow. It finds us and leers at us. It would corner us and paralyze us. Without so much as a finger laid upon us, it would imprison us in a way that no bars ever made could.

At its bidding we do this, or avoid doing that, we go here or do not go there, do not fail to do this, or always fail to do that.

We are the most abject servants of the most cruel master imaginable.

Even when it is not present it sends its bastard son *Worry* to keep us in our place, to remind us that *Fear* is just around the corner ... just out of sight ... a breath away ... and we had better toe the line, and prepare his coming by our obeisance to *Worry*, his pallid and sickly son, every bit as perverse and wicked as his father, just less potent.

They become our gods and we offer them sacrifice: the sacrifice of freedom, of happiness, of security, of liberty ... of peace. We burn them, one and all, upon that pagan altar of punishment to appease the gods of *Fear* and *Worry*. We offer them our lives. More than *offer*, we *give* – and they gladly accept – and *take!* And in return give us what?

Think about it.

They cannot give us the very things that we have sacrificed to *them*. The things most precious to us. *That* was our offering! Remember? They will not give you security, or freedom, or happiness, or liberty ... not so much as a breath of free air! What will they give you in return for what you have surrendered to *them*? What is more precious that they have for which you trade your happiness? Tell me!

What greater calamity can come upon you than you have not already brought upon yourself by surrendering your happiness?

Even should a calamity of such magnitude come upon you – what will it be? What calamity is greater than the loss of happiness, health of mind, freedom of soul, peace, happiness, joy, security? What will this "calamity" be that *Fear* and *Worry* always threaten you with?

Will it deprive you of your happiness? *You already gave that*. Your freedom, your peace of mind – they are *already* gone! What does it threaten to take from you? Your life? Is a life in such miserable servitude and fear worth living? What then will it take from you?

Whatever it wants – because the moment you grasp onto the merest thread of happiness, you offer it to false gods, you surrender it in sacrifice *before it is taken from you*. If at all you hold it, you do so as a tenant farmer from whom the field can be taken on a whim – as though *Fear* and *Worry* gave it and can therefore take it away!

They never gave you anything! Never once did they give you in return! And so you are the most foolish of men, the least wise of women. You surrender all – for nothing ... to keep just a shadow – a *mere* shadow – away from you. And you never succeed in doing so. You are to be the most pitied among men, the most pitiable among women. If you offer your everything to false gods, is it a wonder you get nothing in return? They are false! Fictions! Bogeymen! – and even *were* they real, what will they take from you that is not already theirs?

Do not scourge yourself needlessly. You are not alone. Some just pretend better than others. We all have our Bogeymen. At least many of us.

If, however, we listened to St. John today, we would be free. We would know freedom. Freedom from fear.

How? Through perfect love. Through the love of the Father, a love that understands, recognizes, sees Him as "*Father*", the ***most loving Father***. Who has only One Son. Who is just like His Father.

You are under God's love! If you perfectly trusted that love, it would be perfect love – and drive out all fear.

"If God is with us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8.31)

"We now that all things happen together for the good for those who love God".

What are Christ's words to us? "*Peace!*" "*My Peace I give you. Not as the world gives, do I give to you.*"

Indeed, what are the words that first fall from the lips of nearly *every* Angel He ever sent? "*Get up! Do not be afraid.*"

If you are fortunate enough to have known the love of an earthy father who would lay down his very life for you, protect you from every evil, all harm, give you every good in his power ... *how is it that you esteem God the Father less? ... think Him less loving? Less powerful? His protection less certain?*

Wake up, children! Chase away the shadows and drive out the bastards. Topple that pagan altar to *Fear* and *Worry* upon which you sacrifice yourself and your children! Know the Living God!

The One of Whom Jesus said, "*No one can take them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.*" (St. John 10.28-29)

Breathe the free air! Know peace! Have happiness within yourselves – for only you can surrender it, give it away. Peace. It is God's own gift to you. Keep and cherish what He gives you. He is the Giver of every good thing. He, God alone.

If Bogeymen and bastards howl in the dark, throw up the shades and let the Light of the Living God drive off the demons of a dreamed darkness. When you look out you will find it is empty.

You are His.

And He is Real.

Know God, then! And breathe again ... be free ...



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