

Homily

I had a conversation after last week's homily that reminded me that not all things are translated well. For Lent, I have been offering a glimpse into Sr. Faustina's diary regarding how she was instructed by the Lord to combat spiritual evil. She was a nun! In a convent! We are not. Still, we try to glean whatever is helpful for our own battle with evil. This much is sure: The evil one seeks to divert us from the path to heaven. How can we fix our eyes on the new Jerusalem? Jesus said to Sr. Faustina...

Do not become discouraged by ingratitude.

No one likes to be taken for granted. We work hard for family and faith, and we are glad to do it. At the end of the day, especially when we are tired, it is nice to hear a word of thanks and an acknowledgment that we have served well. Sometimes it seems that nobody notices. Then what?

What can make things even worse is when our good work is met with criticism. We might have moved a mountain, and the only thing noticed is the crumb we left behind. We may have loved a thousand times, and what is noticed is the one time we moaned because we were tired. Not only can others neglect gratitude, but they can also be critical without charity.

When we are met with ingratitude or insensitivity, the spirit of discouragement can weigh us down. Resist all discouragement for it is never of God. It is one of the devil's most effective temptations. Gratitude in all things wins the day.

Mothers, I think you are the most neglected. Thank you! All of you are who serve so well: Do not become discouraged by ingratitude.

It is always good to keep the right motivation in mind: we serve because we are disciples; we serve because it is our vocation. Any other reason will eventually lead to discouragement.

Jesus said: **Do not examine with curiosity the roads down which I lead you.**

The need to know and curiosity about the future is a temptation that has led too many people into the backrooms of psychics. Choose to walk in faith. Decide to trust in God who leads you on the path to heaven. Resist the spirit of curiosity always.

We can be on the path to holiness and know we are on the path to holiness, and still questions come into our minds: "What if..." or "How about..." We can sabotage our spiritual life by running ahead of grace. It is so difficult to remain in the present and to be open to its grace and challenge.

Curiosity seems so innocent. When it comes to curiosity regarding God's will for us, it is better to surrender in obedience than it is to ponder and dream. Trust in God. Anything else can be a diversion and an opportunity for the evil one to derail God's perfect plan.

Jesus said: **When boredom and discouragement beat against your heart, run away from yourself and hide in My heart.**

Earlier in the Diary, he told St. Faustina that the devil most easily tempts *idle souls*. Beware of boredom. Idle souls are easy prey for demons.

Bored children get into mischief. Boredom was the occasion for my younger brothers to put the ketchup and mustard bottles into the dryer. Boredom led me to throw apples at passing cars and eggs at dark houses. Boredom leads others to indecent places on line and can be the opportunity for all sorts of addictive behavior.

Even if we are not engaging in sin when we are bored, we can be lulled into lethargy by activities designed to simply pass time—television, movies, electronic games. Lethargy dulls our senses, including our spiritual awareness. For many years, I had time for TV in the evening but no time at all for my night prayers. I had time—I was simply lulled into not caring.

Be about the business of God. When boredom and discouragement beats against your heart, “run away from yourself and hide in My heart,” says Jesus.

Lastly for today, Jesus said: **Do not fear struggle; courage itself often intimidates temptations, and they dare not attack us.**

Some say that fear is the second most common tactic of the devil (pride is the first). Courage intimidates the devil—he will flee in the face of persevering courage that stands on Jesus, the rock.

My dad had a crisp little saying when we were discouraged by a challenge: *That's no hill for a climber!* Do you have a mountain to climb? If God wants you to climb it, you will have the strength to do it. If you do not have the strength, then God will otherwise provide for you.

It is important to note that Jesus is not promising a life without struggle! Oh no. He says: *Do not fear struggle!* Too often Christians give up in the face of struggle; vocations are abandoned, good works are deserted and acts of sacrificial love are forsaken.

Let us glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ: what appeared to the world to be the moment of failure was in fact the moment of victory! The only person who was truly afraid when Jesus fell under the weight of the Cross was the devil.

Jesus said:

Do not fear struggle, courage itself often intimidates temptations, and they dare not attack us.

Do not become discouraged by ingratitude.

Do not examine with curiosity the roads down which I lead you.

When boredom and discouragement beat against your heart, run away from yourself and hide in My heart.