

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily
Sunday, June 21, 2026
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A

“Do not be afraid.”

Jesus says this in today’s gospel –not once, not twice, but three times. Because Jesus knows that fear is one of the greatest struggles of every human heart. The readings today revolve around a common experience: fear.

In the first reading, Jeremiah is overwhelmed by opposition. People mock him, criticize him, and even plot against him. Yet he declares: “The Lord is with me, *like a mighty champion. Jeremiah is afraid, but he refuses to let fear control him.*

His courage does not come from confidence in himself. It comes from confidence in the God who stood beside him. In the gospel, Jesus prepares His disciples for a difficult mission. They will be misunderstood. They will face rejection. They will experience opposition. Yet Jesus repeatedly says: *“Do not be afraid.”*

Be not afraid... because God’s care is greater than every threat, than every rejection, than every uncertainty. Because God’s love is greater. Because God’s providence is greater. Because the God who holds the universe in His hands is the same God who holds our lives in His heart.

Jesus points to the sparrows: Not one falls to the ground without the Father's knowledge. Then He says something astonishing: "Even all the hairs of your head are counted." In other words, God knows us completely. Nothing about our lives escapes His attention. God sees the burdens you never speak about, the tears you hide from others, and the fears you carry alone.

Fear grows when we focus on our problems. Trust grows when we focus on God's presence. The more we stare at our fears, the bigger they seem. We begin to think that our problems are bigger than us. We begin to imagine the worst possible outcomes. We become overwhelmed by uncertainty.

But when we focus on God's presence rather than our problems, our perspective begins to change. The problem may still be there. The uncertainty may still remain. The burden may still be heavy. But we know we do not carry it alone. The Christian life deepens when trust becomes greater than fear. Not when fear completely disappears. Not when all our questions are answered. Not when all our problems are solved. But when we choose to trust God more than we trust our fears. Faith is not the absence of fear. Faith is deciding that God's presence is more certain than our fears, and God's promises are more reliable than our worries.

Today's gospel is especially relevant for us today because we live in a culture increasingly shaped by anxiety. We fear making mistakes and failing. We fear being judged and criticized. We fear being left behind and forgotten.

We fear an uncertain future. But Jesus invites us to a different way of living. Not a life without problems or challenges. But a life anchored in trust.

Every morning, we have a choice: Will fear be our guide? Or will faith be our guide? Will we focus on the size of our problems? Or on the greatness of our God?

The command *“Do not be afraid”* is not merely a comforting suggestion. It is an invitation from Jesus to place our lives in the hands of the Father who knows us, loves us, and never abandons us.

The future may be uncertain. People may disappoint us. Plans may fail. Storms may come and fears may remain, but the hands that hold the universe are the same hands that hold us.