

CATHOLIC HOMILY

# Homily Transcript

*June 21, 2026*

I think you know that as I preach, I like to try to find the connection that the Church has laid out between the first reading and the Gospel. That's always the first thing that I look for as I'm preparing my homily, is what is the connection? What is the theme? What is the tie between the two? Because there's always some sort of connection there. And from there, that's where I kind of try to build a homily off of that. Because in my mind, that's the thing that the Church is presenting us to kind of meditate on for any given Sunday throughout the year.

So as I was kind of thinking about this, and maybe there's actually probably several themes that you could make the connection between the first reading and the Gospel today. But the one that really stood out to me is this theme or the word fear. It comes up in the Gospel. It comes up in the first reading here. And so when Jesus says to the 12, fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be made known. And then a couple lines later, and do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. And so the sense of like, and the Scriptures say this 365 times, don't be afraid.

Fear not. Have no fear. Be not afraid. I am with you. 365 times this is a reoccurring theme. In other words, we probably need to hear this more often than not. But bringing that, tying that into Jeremiah from our first reading. Jeremiah, one of the prophets that when he first started as a prophet, so to speak, everything was well and good. But then as he started challenging the people, hey, you guys are doing wrong. You need to change. All of a sudden, they shifted. They're like, let's get rid of this guy. We can't stand him. And so that's what our reading, our first reading is today. I don't know if you caught that from Jeremiah.

Jeremiah said, I hear whisperings of many, terror on every side, denounce, let us denounce him. All those who were my friends are now on watch for any misstep of mine. It almost sounds like, he didn't know any better, like almost like paranoia, but like, it's legit. Like they were trying to kill him. So this sense of Jeremiah, of the fear that he has is like, that's what Jesus is referring to. Be not afraid of those who can kill the body, but can't kill the soul. And there's this shift that happens in our reading today. But the Lord is with me like a mighty champion. My persecutors, they will stumble and fall. They will not triumph.

And even in our gospel, I don't know if you notice, there's a definitive shift that happens from the first half when Jesus is saying, be not afraid. And then he gives us kind of the antidote to that fear. Here's what he says. Be not afraid of those who can destroy the body, but cannot kill the soul. And then here's

his antidote. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin. Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your father's knowledge. So do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows. It's a lesson that Jesus teaches over and over and over again.

But it's interesting, the sense of fear of the enemy, fear of the unknown, fear of failure, fear of whatever that thing is, Jesus's antidote is recognize your father knows what you need. So taking this idea, this concept that both Jeremiah who says they're surrounding me and they're ready to kill me, but the Lord is on my side. King David, the exact same thing. People are trying to kill him, but the Lord is a mighty warrior. He is my defense and my shield. Over and over and over again, this is what it is. Now, I don't know if you've ever heard of Maslov's hierarchy of needs and the psychologist that has the five layers of needs that make a triangle.

And at the base, at the bottom of that triangle, the biggest, widest section of needs that we have is the physiological needs. If we don't have those taken care of, we will die. And we can't advance anywhere beyond that. The physiological needs, food, water, shelter, we need to be warm enough and cold enough and our physiological needs, that's our first primary need. Everybody has it and unless and until that is taken care of, you cannot advance beyond anything beyond that. But after that physiological needs, after our food and water is met, the next group of needs, the next highest level of need is safety or security. And so, the sense of, I am safe.

Now, you can point to other cultures that there's the hunter-gatherer cultures or kind of the tribal cultures throughout history that they haven't really advanced beyond just collecting nuts and berries and killing deer. There's not great architecture. There's not great masterpieces of philosophy and theology and all those kind of things. Those cultures, they're staying at the base level, the base level of human needs, physiological needs. We're spending 90% of our time just trying to get food, okay? And then beyond that, we're spending 90% of our time just trying to make sure that the Vikings down the road or down the river are not coming in and murdering us in the middle of the night.

So, all of our attention is spent there. And before we can go on beyond that to other needs and actualization is what he calls it, those needs have to be met. Now, this is the part that I find fascinating and where it relates to today. The number one individual responsible for a sense of safety and security for a child is their father. It's dad. And I can, I don't know, maybe you remember saying this or maybe you've overheard other kids saying this. I can explicitly remember saying this phrase when I was like five, six years old to my little friend group like, my dad can beat up your dad. You know what I'm saying? My dad can beat up your dad. What does that translate to in kids speak? I feel secure, right?

That's what that means. There's a security there. A dad is responsible for that sense of safety or security. That's why when there's a bump in the night and the knock on the door, the dad's the one who goes down with the baseball bat, checks on the kids and that kind of thing. That's a father's role. And when that role is not fulfilled and our base level of needs are not met of safety and security, it causes all kinds of complications later on in life and in childhood too, for that matter. I don't think it's any coincidence

that God has chosen to reveal himself as a father. He didn't say, he didn't teach us to say our doctor who art in heaven, our mother who art in heaven.

It was very intentional that he chose father to reveal himself because that is who he is eternally. Father eternally be getting the son and in God the father, every father finds their meaning, their purpose and their mission. Jesus' antidote to the fear of those who can kill the body but they cannot kill the soul is, my dad can beat up your dad. That's really what it is. This trust, this understanding, this conviction and the very marrow of our bones, the deepest layer of our soul, that God is a father who loves us.

Unfortunately, fortunately and unfortunately I suppose, fathers do reveal to us a lot about God for better or for worse and I've met people, I've talked to people, worked through them with people who cannot pray the our father. I've actually been to parishes, not in our diocese, a whole parish, a whole church that they, when they say it's time for the our father at mass, they will say our God who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name and they strip fatherhood from God and individuals I've talked to have said my father was not a good man and I want nothing to do with him and if a God is like my father then I want nothing to do with that.

It makes sense but our father is a good father and so a father who who does fulfill that role, who is sacrificing and laying down his life day after day, in many ways unseen, unthought, unappreciated, like that is an image, that is an icon that little kids even three, two, three, four, five years old, they see it and they learn it and if perhaps this relationship with God as father, as a loving father who cares for us, if that is not convicted in your heart, if that is not something that you operate out of on a daily basis, I would challenge you because I am of the opinion, I would, I am convinced that this teaching, this dogma, this truth, this revelation of who God is, is so central to the Christian faith that if we don't get this right we will mess up pretty much everything else after that.

We will be off target if we don't have a conviction that God is a father who loves us. It is that important and so if that is not the case, if your image of God is skewed or warped somehow, I would just ask that you ask. That's what Jesus said, asking you to receive, seeking you'll find, knock and the door will be opened. Lord, father, reveal to me your love. Father, help me to understand, to be convicted the truth that you love me.

That is a prayer that is absolutely legitimate, is absolutely something that each of us, and I don't care, maybe you have a very close, you consider yourself having a close relationship with God, maybe there's, you feel, you have a vibrant faith, even then that, that role and that relationship with God the father can be strengthened. And from there, and when you see, when you encounter Christians who have that kind of conviction, who live out of that place of surety, of my dad can beat up your dad, my father can beat up your father. When they, a Christian is convicted of that, you can't stop them.

They're not worried about a mean comment on Facebook or maybe a scowl that somebody says because they have a different belief. All of a sudden they can live in freedom, they can live what their

faith teaches without being afraid. All of it goes back to, do we have a father who loves us and who is capable of protecting us, of defending us, of providing for us. Brothers and sisters, that is the God that we worship, a good and loving father.