

HOMILY
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Rev. Andrew A. Czajkowski
St. John the Evangelist Parish
Davison, Michigan

A couple came to their local police department wanting to dispose of some ammunition. They handed the desk officer a wooden box and explained that it contained two bullets an uncle had given them from World War II. “We didn’t know what to do with them,” the woman explained, “so all these years, we kept the bullets in the bottom of the China cabinet, away from our children.”

The officer assured the couple that he would dispose of the bullets safely. But when he took one out of the box, the top came off, revealing a strange black substance. His suspicions aroused, the officer removed the top of the other bullet and found a hard white substance. The officer was amused. The so-called bullets were really souvenir salt and pepper shakers. All those years, this couple had been afraid of a harmless pair of salt and pepper shakers. Of course, they didn’t know they weren’t harmless. In their minds, they thought they might explode at any time.

It’s funny how our minds can cause us so much discomfort, so much distress. Case in point: a child is told there are no monsters under the bed, but when the lights go off, the child’s imagination runs wild.

Now, let’s apply this to our lives. Are not most of our fears products of our imagination? There is no monster threatening us at the moment, but our imagination is running wild. “What if I get sick?” “What if my child falls in with the wrong crowd?” “What if real estate values fall or the stock markets crash?” “What if I get passed over for the promotion?” And on and on we go imagining one disaster after another. No wonder Jesus counseled us to live one day at a time. Hey, today’s a good day. Let’s rejoice and be glad in it!

Then we come to today’s lesson from the Second Reading. *“...those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons (and daughters) of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption through whom we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”*

Paul is asking us to imagine ourselves as children of God. Of course, this isn't just our imagination. In Christ, we are indeed children of God. But, in our minds, in our imagination, many of us have not accepted that fact.

How would we walk if we thought of ourselves as God's own child? Wouldn't we walk with our shoulders thrown back and our chest sticking out, not out of pride, but out of confidence and assurance that we can handle whatever life may throw at us?

THIS IS SO IMPORTANT. Many people live defeated lives, and it has to be because they do not know who they really are—God's own. And this truth complicates their life.

During World War II, a study was made of soldiers in Italy who had been wounded in battle. The study found that only one of three soldiers with severe wounds asked for morphine. Many said they felt no pain or the pain was minor. The pattern contrasted sharply with the same study with civilians—80% of those patients who had wounds very similar to the soldiers begged for morphine or other painkillers.

There is a connection between our minds and the pain we are experiencing. You've known people who walk around as if they have the weight of the world on their shoulders. You see other people carrying burdens just as heavy, yet they are positive, upbeat, a joy to be around.

We say the difference is attitude. But what is attitude? Doesn't it have to do with the way we imagine ourselves? If we see ourselves as victims, we will act accordingly. However, if we see ourselves as God's own children, we will act in accordance with our beliefs.

As a child of the King of the Universe, nothing in this world can defeat you. The events that occur each day, regardless of how painful they may be, are opportunities for you not only to build your fortune, but also to build your character and your spiritual stature.

Today, we celebrate our faith that God is a trinity of persons—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. To our limited minds, this Trinity of Three is a big mystery. But this same Trinity of Three is also a community of many, which include loved and chosen children without number.

How can any of us keep from singing?