

OVERCOMING FEAR

THROUGH FAITH AND LOVE

from the writings of Catherine Doherty

The following excerpts are taken from *The Gospel Without Compromise*, first printed in 1976 and *Dearly Beloved: Letters to the Children of My Spirit, Vol. I*

When the recent terrorism incident happened in the States, it was a suspended moment, out of time, when we had to face the reality of a fiery death in Washington, New York, and other places. It was a fearsome and tragic moment. The world felt breathless, awaiting a response.

I spoke with our group about our behavior and attitudes to such emergencies, as to what was happening at the moment and what might happen tomorrow in our strange, twilight world of cold and hot wars. We Christians must be prepared for these moments. It will be normal for us to be afraid. This is a legitimate fear, not an illusory fear.

Fear has indeed come to dwell in the world. Its immense shadow has entered the halls of government and the minds of those who govern. Like a dark mist, fear has seeped into every nook and corner of the world. It has come to dwell in palatial homes and in city apartments. No one is exempt from its influence. People are afraid to travel by air. We go to sleep wondering if our cities will be attacked. People walk in constant fear — psychological fear, spiritual fear, physical fear. Fear puts deep and tragic roots into our hearts.

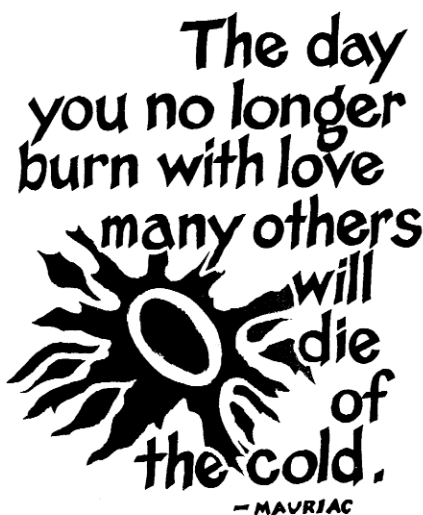
With fear comes doubt: look at all the destruction! How can I believe in a God who would permit such things? We forget that God is tender, compassionate, understanding, forgiving. God did not start the bombing, did not hijack the planes, did not kill or maim people in wars. We have a tendency to blame God for these things, a tendency begotten, perhaps, by the fears and near-madness that surround us today.

Fear is also the child of hate and of ignorance and of prejudice. It cannot stand the light of love, of peace and of truth. Why have we allowed our days to be filled with fear-begetting thoughts and actions? Terrorism could not have found a fertile soil for

its hates to grow in if we had not prepared that soil in some strange fashion.

This is the time for stillness. Stand still and listen so that you can get perspective on your life according to God's plan. We belong to God who is Perfect Love. Perfect love casts out all fears and makes human, bodily fears of destruction and death bearable with his graces.

Our first step should be to gather together in prayer — prayer for peace, prayer that leaders and all of us



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Pass It On! #32

The day
you no longer
burn with love
many others
will die
of
the cold.
— MAURICE

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#32

will keep our sanity, prayer for the dark clouds to pass by, prayer that all remember that God exists and that they turn to him. Our hearts must be constantly beseeching and calling upon the mercy of God and his intervention in our human affairs, as we go about our daily lives.

Across the centuries his gentle voice is still heard in the land: “Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends.” Perfect love casts out fear. Perfect love lays down its life. Have we forgotten about this? We must act on it before fear has bound us with its strong and ominous ropes. For if we allow fear to dominate us, then indeed those who have the power to kill our bodies will also have the power to kill our souls, and we shall have given them that power.

We stand on a very narrow edge today. Which way are we going to move? Along the edge of faith, hope and love? This is the path God gives us when we listen.

For whether we know it or not, the strange pall of sin falls like a dark fog over the whole world, and we are walking through it. No wonder we are full of fears.

God will blow the fog away if we let him, if we stand still and listen. Stand still and listen to what your heart

says. The voice of the Lord will speak to our hearts. When we listen to him we realize that “my brother is my life,” and fear falls away. This is the hour of standing still, of listening, the hour of prayer. The situation will change for the better when we all take to heart his command that we love one another. Let us begin to live the gospel without compromise, and fear will be cast out. Love will come to reign and we might yet experience its fruit — peace.

Those of us who are far removed from the seat of the conflict at the moment must go about our duty of the moment and offer it for the same intentions as our prayers. We must also take all necessary precautions to prolong our lives and those of others. But at all times our thoughts must be thoughts of peace and of love.

Adapted from *The Gospel Without Compromise* and *Dearly Beloved: Letters to the Children of My Spirit, Vol. I*, both by Catherine Doherty and available from Madonna House Publications.

Catherine Doherty (1896-1985), born in Russia, was foundress of Madonna House and a prolific writer and teacher. Her passionate zeal impelled her to pass on her faith in God. She is now being considered for sainthood by the Catholic Church.