

SERMON 809

25th Week after Pentecost

November 13, 2013

919th Week as Priest

745th Week at St Dunstan's

10th Week at Epiphany-Tallassee

NOTHING TO FEAR

Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We have nothing to fear—not in this life, nor in the life to come. Our collect tells us plainly that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, came to earth at the fullness of time in order to “destroy the works of the devil.” We claim this truth in Holy Week each spring—that Christ has conquered sin and death. And so, we have nothing to fear.

Living without fear is not the same as living without suffering. Indeed, we have no promise that we will be exempt from suffering in this life. Innocent suffering, in particular, is problematic for us all. How can we come to terms with illness, with sickness and pain? How can we accept the death of a child, or any young person for that matter? Indeed, how do we face the inevitable and unavoidable fact of our own death?

The clear answer, I believe, is found in Paul's writing to the Thessalonians. “Stand firm,” he said, “and hold to the traditions

which you were taught.” We know that suffering produces endurance, and that endurance builds character, and character builds hope, and hope does not disappoint us. This is the “eternal comfort and good hope through grace” that our Lord Jesus Christ has given to every one of us.

So try not to worry about anything, not everyday matters of what you will eat, or what you will wear—and try not to worry about the great matters of life and death, sin and suffering, judgment and salvation. Instead, give thanks to God always. Let no one deceive you. It is God’s good pleasure that you belong to him and him alone.

We have nothing to fear, I promise you. **AMEN.**