

Father John Catoir

# Fear Is the Enemy

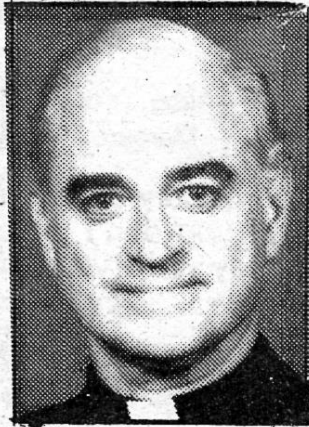
Have you ever suffered from a morbid dissatisfaction with your daily life, or been haunted by the feeling that the years are slipping by too fast and you're not becoming the person you always wanted to be?

Chances are you need a retreat or a day of recollection, or maybe as little as two hours alone with your thoughts. Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote, "Most of us lead lives that two hours of reflection would lead us to disown."

I'm not sure I completely agree with Stevenson. Most of us are on the right track, living the life God has called us to live, but our mental attitude is often burdened by needless worry and an unfortunate propensity to put ourselves down.

Three areas of difficulty need to be examined to break out of the doldrums: 1.) the degree of one's inner censorship; 2.) the extent of one's feelings of inferiority; and 3.) the quality of one's kindness to others.

Taking the third point first — it goes without saying that the more you think of others, the less you will be preoccupied with yourself. Thinking of others will force you to cling to



God more, because it isn't always easy to be a loving person. Draw power from Him every day, and your charitable nature will blossom like spring flowers.

Regarding point one — if you are worn out by your own inner censorship, it is probably a throw-back to your upbringing. The severe voice of a censoring parent has a way of remaining in the psyche. The trick is to learn to forgive yourself frequently, and laugh at yourself more. God loves you and forgives you, so why act as though you are outside of his saving grace? Wake up!

Feelings of inferiority are a more complex emotional problem to deal with. If you have the habit of putting yourself down by always underrating your abilities, try to change your thinking patterns. Fear is the enemy. Fear of criticism, fear of punishment and fear of failure will get you nowhere. Distance yourself from fear. The child in you is afraid, but you are an adult.

Take that frightened child by the hand and ignore all screams of resistance. Go out and meet the challenges of the day. You are under the Lord's blessing, so no matter what happens, cling to the knowledge of His love. God's life is in you. Can you imagine what that means? Lift your heart and have a new confidence.