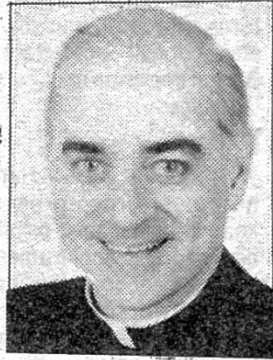


Father John Catoir

Spiritual Comfort

As I get older and hopefully wiser, I become more and more convinced that God wants us to draw true spiritual comfort from His presence within us. He wants us to be happy now because of our faith in His love. This idea was the basis of my book "Enjoy The Lord," written more than 10 years ago.



We are in better tune with God when we appreciate His indwelling presence. The two enemies of this appreciation are fear and guilt.

When you read the New Testament make a mental note of the number of warnings Jesus issued against fear. He wants us to banish fear as much as we can from our thinking. It means trusting Him more and not being afraid.

Left unguarded the human mind reacts like a frightened child to any sign of danger, real or imagined. The Lord said, "Fear is useless, you must learn to trust." Trust is the litmus test of an active faith.

To those who fret needlessly over their past sins or their current weakness He delivers the same striking message: "Do not be afraid, have faith in Me ... Be of good cheer." Jesus wants you to depend on His strength.

Once a sin is confessed and absolved it is no longer an obstacle to grace, and guilt no longer serves a purpose. Very few people commit sins of malice anyway. Sins of weakness are more a sign of immaturity than of any contempt of God's authority. We are all better off thanking God for His mercy and forgiveness than wallowing in self-reproach.

Learn to trust His love as it enfolds and embraces you. The Lord is healing all your

wounds right now as you read these words. When you pray, be still. Look and listen as God reveals Himself in the wonders of creation, and the beauty of nature.

In contemplative prayer you remain conscious, but not necessarily conscious of anything in particular, especially not yourself. In fact, when you spend a lot of time thinking of yourself, you're on the wrong track. When you open your soul to the wonders of the universe you become totally unself-conscious.

You were made for happiness and true spiritual comfort, and you have the power to seize this happiness and hold on to it. Say no to your fears. Calm yourself and know that your saving God is near.

"...I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a child quieted at its mother's breast, like a child that is quieted is my soul. O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time forth and forever more." (Psalm 131)

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