

FROM THE PASTOR

My dear brothers and sisters,

This weekend's reading can sound very harrowing, as Jesus tells us

**All that you see here –
the days will come when there will not be left
a stone upon another stone that will not be thrown down.**

He also speaks about wars, insurrections, earthquakes, famines, and plagues, as well as the persecution of Christians. Honestly, it is easy to question how we can say, "The Gospel of the Lord" after a reading like this, since, of course, Gospel means Good News. Remember, though the last lines in the Gospel:

**Not a hair on your head will be destroyed.
By your perseverance you will secure your lives.**

There it is, plain and simple – the Gospel, the Good News: **God is taking care of us.**

Next weekend is the Solemnity of Christ the King and thus, the end of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Maybe you missed something this year and you're saying to yourself that it seemed like every other year. If that's so, I would say that it's not too late to grab hold of the extraordinary graces of mercy that God so longs to pour out upon us. One of the core messages of Mercy is *Trust*; Trust in God, in His love, in His mercy. At the bottom of the image of Divine Mercy are the words: "**Jesus, I Trust in You.**" At the beginning of the Chaplet we pray before Mass, we say (three times, even), "**O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You!**" God is calling us to TRUST IN HIM! We can still grab ahold of the graces of this Year – even after the Jubilee is over – by trusting in God, trusting is His providential love for us, for me, by trusting in His mercy, and not being afraid of running into His loving Arms.

Do you believe that God will take care of you? Do you believe that He has a plan for your life; a *good* plan for your life? Do you believe this with the trust of Faith? Do you believe that should war, insurrections, earthquakes, famines and plagues come and ravage our land and our homes, that God will still be taking care of us? Do you trust Him? When we lose our jobs, God will still take care of us. When we get a terminal illness, God will never abandon us. When we recoil at the politics in our country, God is still in charge (just a note that this article was written and submitted before Election Day).

Often it doesn't feel like He's in charge, though. Yeah, I know it feels this way on the macro level, but we have but to look at Salvation History and see how God continued to move in powerful ways throughout the Old Testament and the New, as well as through the history of the Church, even with all sorts of chaos going on.

Beyond that, though, it doesn't feel like He's in charge on the *micro* level – in *my* life, *my* family, *my* circumstances. This is usually because He is *not* in charge; **I'm in charge.** Here's the key to Trusting in God – we have to **let God be God.** If I run everything in my life, if I don't surrender it to Him, He will respect my freedom. He watches, lamenting the trouble we bring upon ourselves, and waits with great expectation and longing for us finally to surrender and let Him take care of us. To use an analogy: If our Daddy promises to protect us as we go through a scary tunnel, he needs us to hold his hand and stay close to him. If we choose, though, to run away from him, then he can't keep us safe. Our Daddy God wants to protect us through the darkness of this world, but we have to stay close to Him, under His protection. If we run off, trying to be in charge of our own lives, we reject His protection. And God weeps to watch us suffer and hurt ourselves.

This year has been an invitation to trust God more fully. And He is TRUSTWORTHY! I encourage you to examine your life: what are the areas where you try to cling to control. Can you allow God to be in control there? Are you afraid of what God will ask of you if you surrender it to Him? Do you really believe the truth that God wants you to be *happy*, and will do everything in His power to make you happy?

As we come to the close of the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, I pray that we will trust God more with each passing day. He really is in control of the universe. And when the storms of life come and batter our "houses," He will still be with us, taking care of us, holding us close to Him in His merciful, gentle and powerful Arms – if we only surrender and trust enough to *let* Him hold us.