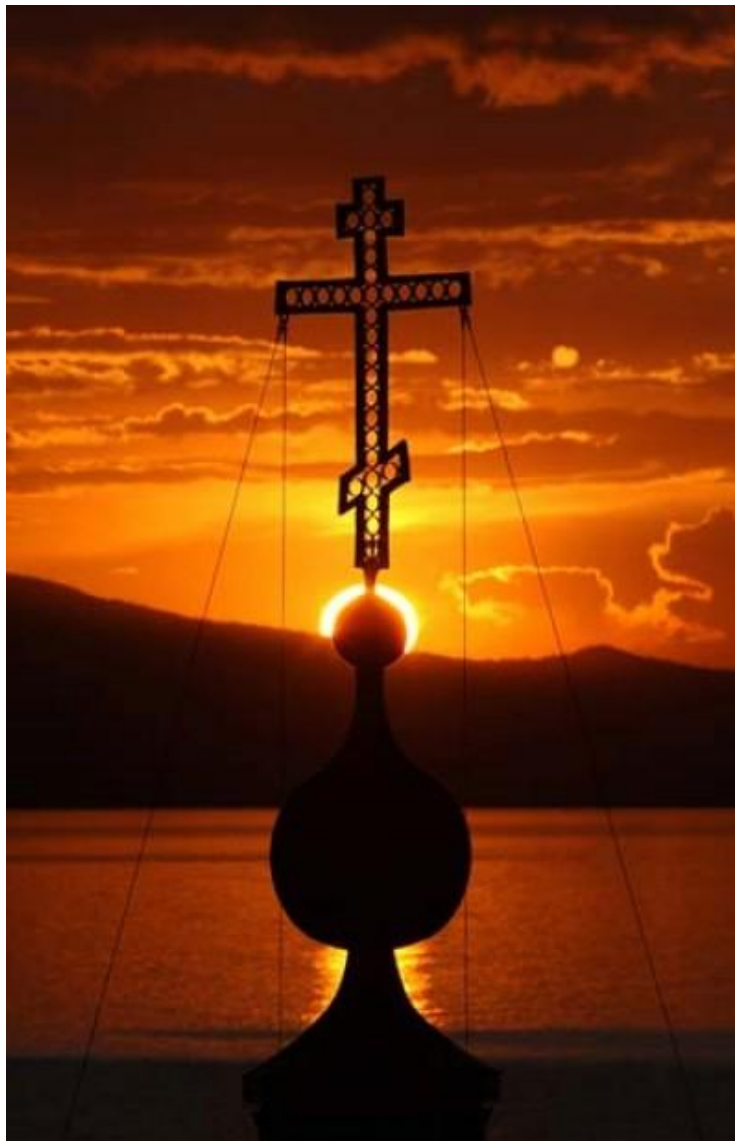


## Turning Fear Into Faith



That ugly and omnipresent thorn called worry! Since it's a chronic, recurrent condition, it's been called the "Worry Disease." I think worry must be Satan's best weapon against man. Our minds are incessantly preoccupied with our daily cares. During peace-filled, "quiet time" moments of prayer and reflection we confidently profess our faith to God and feel His peace. Yet, this is so often immediately forgotten, preempted by the next worrisome preoccupation. At times, it's maddening! Too often our "old nature" chooses to worry rather than to trust God. Worry is a sin because we aren't taking God at his Word.

Virtually everyone is stressed out today. We fear various problems and what they may do to us. For example, I have worked in pharmaceutical marketing and medical communications for 30+ years and have witnessed incredible changes in the healthcare landscape. I laugh out loud when I remember how in the past I used to complain about various working conditions. However, they were minimal compared to today's constant stream of pressures. Now there are insecurities about the marketplace, the unrelenting ferocity of managed care, stressed-out clients willing to change their ad agency "on a whim," and the constant barrage of economic and socio-political uncertainties. It seems every industry, both private and government, is beleaguered by economic crises today.

I guess crying in my beard (?) is both selfish and narrow-minded. Whether we live or have lived in affluence or in abject poverty, we will always have fears and anxieties. Let's face it; we live in a fallen world. We have to deal with it, and there's only one way to do that: constantly pause and know that God is in control.

When I'm having dark days and am beset by challenges of all sorts, I put my distress in God's hands and really trust, really believe. He always delivers, and the more I trust, the less my discomfort, and the better the outcome.

Besides entreating the Lord, I must also thank Him. Since the human race is innately selfish, our conversation with God is often a big, one-sided "all about me." But when we balance our requests with heartfelt thanksgiving, i.e., when it becomes an integral part of our lives, giving thanks can only diminish our despair and contribute to inner peace and real joy. It's so easy to avow faith and to rationalize it. But faith in action, which means practicing our faith day by day, moment by moment, is the hard part.

Let's face it. Every day is a life challenge to varying degrees. The storms we face-personal, social, work-related, spiritual, or financial-will always be there. In order to put things into the proper perspective, there are several actions we can take:

**1.** Start every day with a thanksgiving prayer. One of my favorites was written by Fr. Thomas Hopko:

We praise You, Lord Jesus for showing us how to live day by day without fear, serving obediently, always entrusting our lives into Your care. And we thank you Lord Jesus for showing us how to die, how to gain the victory, how to attain the crown of life by commending our souls into the Father's hands.

**2.** Repeat the Jesus Prayer ("Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner") for focus.

**3.** Recite short Bible verses. These can also help to assuage the anxieties of life whenever those inevitable afflictions rear their ugly heads. Meaningful verses like the following can really lift the weight of our woes:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:6-7).

Be still and know that I am God (Psalms 46:10).

Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not upon your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5).

There is no formula, no antibiotic, no magic elixir for eradicating worry and fear. It's a matter of developing childlike faith, a conscious effort to trust in God. If and when He is willing, that burden will become lighter as we grow in His wisdom and grace.

Bottom line: There can be peace in our hearts only when we turn to the One, True Source of peace, Jesus Christ. As He affirmed, "[My] peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

Every day requires a reaffirmation of faith. If we seek God and His values, God will provide for us in wonderful ways we can never imagine. To know the pardon, joy, peace and power that come through Christ, we must personally receive Him by faith. And if our hearts are to change, our faith must be real.

Source: <http://www.pravmir.com/turning-fear-into-faith/>