

John 20:19-23 [RSV]

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Creator has sent me, even so I send you."

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

1 John 4:18

¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

Our worst fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'who am I to be so brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?' Actually, who are we not to be? You are a child of God: Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God within us. It is not just in some of us, it is in everyone and as we let our own light shine we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Sat in the car outside church.

Walked round The Acorn five times on two occasions before I had the courage.

A mother's love erases fear when her child is in danger.

When we were threatened by an angry mob Leon pushed himself in front of me and defended me automatically, without a second thought.

Love's victory over fear is not an intellectual concept, but strong and immediate.

Fear poisons and twists us – we make elaborate structures to justify our fear and feed on fear to achieve corrupt ends. Fear of blacks, Jews, homosexuals – where fear is driving love is non-existent. Fear is behind our horrors and atrocities, fear is the tool or wellspring of our holocausts and devastations – it walks hand in hand with the bitter fruit of human hatred. Fear begets hatred. We hate to try and 'face down' our fears – we enter fight mode when our instinct is flight as a way of circumventing our terror.

Old lady in Burnt Oak – housebound through fear, convinces herself that the outside world is evil to justify her position.

The outcome of bravery and authenticity is transformation.

Getting out of the boat and experiencing glory.

GLORY is a concept passed over by the sane and sensible, but the only thing REALLY worth living for.

We are like the heroine in old films, who has her hair in a bun and wears frumpy spectacles – the hero takes them off and says; "but you're beautiful Miss Jones!"

At worst we face a 'Le Mauvais Pas' – bad step (a place in mountaineering that is especially difficult to pass) but it gives access to the mountain top. Any risk is worth the glory of standing on the mountaintop – of walking on water – of transfiguration – of being in the presence of God.

We must deconstruct fear by reaching for a place in the presence of God where NOTHING can frighten us.

We must seek God's Spirit within ourselves to ease and assist this process, to lift us out of mere human weakness to real humanity.

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If we form ourselves as creatures of love, people in the habit of loving, then fear falls away like chaff or dust from our feet. The habit is the way of internalising what we understand with our heads – the habit of the presence of God, the habit of equality, the habit of love replaces the habit of fear and weakness and hate.