

In the time between Christmas and Ordinary Time the Church gives us in the First Reading excerpts from the Epistles or Letters of St. John.

John's writings are wonderful to read - from the Prologue of his Gospel through the Book of Revelation. John's theology is succinct and almost binary in its computer-program-like precision.

The final line of today's First Reading:

*There is no fear in love,
but perfect love drives out fear
because fear has to do with punishment,
and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love.*

Can help us to evaluate our relationship with God and Jesus Christ. If there is fear in our relationship, then we need to cover it with the Love of God ... that way we can be "*perfect in love*" and when we are ... "[t]here [will be] no fear."

We see this played out again in the Gospel.

The Apostles are in a boat, struggling in the night to row against the wind; when they see something coming across the water.

Think of it as the First Century equivalent of a UFO.

But it's not a UFO ... it's Jesus. But the Apostles are so freaked out that they start to lose it.

Jesus tells them: "*Take courage, it is I, do not be afraid!*"

For us, as we struggle with our own progress against the winds of shortcomings, personal loss, and the often contradictory voice of the world ... we may freak out when confronted with the Presence of Jesus ... in another Christian, in the Word of God, or even in the Eucharist.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us "*take courage*" ... knowing that it truly is Jesus ... and "*not be afraid.*"

For in His presence ... in the Presence of God ... we are in the Presence of Perfect Love ... which can "*drive ... out fear.*" May God - Who is Love - perfect us in His perfect love ... this day, and always.