



# Reflections on 'The Greater Things'

SEPTEMBER 2020

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*"Amen, Amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12)*

## STAND FIRM Jaci Phillips, PhD

***"Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm."*** Ephesians 6:10, NASB.

Dear friends, we are living in days of storms, days in which the enemy has thrown much of society into something like a popcorn air popper. People are thrown by the virus and by fear, people are tossed by division after division; whether in our own Church, between believers, between races, between classes, between political beliefs, etc., etc., etc. I recently listened to a sermon in which media personalities were touted as the 'new priests and pastors,' not just reporting, but telling people what to believe. The priest (and many other good shepherds) cautioned people to *turn off the TV and step away from negative, fearful, and divisive social media*. This is sound advice. Years ago, I used to watch a show that was on right before or right after the news called Entertainment Tonight. Back then I noticed that the regular news was looking more and more like the Hollywood gossip show. I stopped watching almost all TV over 6 years ago. This morning I made the mistake of turning on a morning news program to try to see if there was any important news. I was met with story after story after story about Hollywood... who got divorced, who died of what, who had a record debuting at #1, and on and on and on. I kept longing to hear important stories from our own country. They are there. I thirsted for information on important things people are struggling with in other countries. They are there. NOTHING. In 30 minutes of 'news' there was not one story that had anything to do with one thing that was of

real importance. We must examine the artificial and deceptive authority we have given to the media and to 'celebrities.'

In these disconcerting times, we are in one of two places:

*"Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was engulfed by the waves; but Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'"*  
*"You of little faith," Jesus replied, "why are you so afraid?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it was perfectly calm."* - Matthew 8:24-26, Berean Study Bible

Are we inside of the boat with Jesus, recognizing that there is a spiritual storm/battle raging everywhere, yet we have the protection and reassurance of supernatural faith that makes us able to 'stand firm'? Or are we in the other place, the popcorn popper place, where we are focused on how big the spiritual (and physical) waves are and how violent the thunder, and the lightening being thrown upon the earth. If our primary focus is on the ferocity of the current storm and on the lies of the enemy, we forget that the **Jesus is the Lord of the storm**, and we lose our ability to 'stand firm.' Like Peter when he removed his eyes from the Lord to look at the storm, we also are overcome by fear and wind and waves.

*"For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control."* 2 Timothy 2:7, ESV. If fear does not come from God, then we need to examine closely the sources in our society responsible for spreading nearly solely fear. This is not of God. It does not increase faith or belief. These sources

focus on yelling *"Look! Look! See how big the waves are! Be afraid!"* Indeed, we either fear the storm and panic, or even though we may fear, we quickly look back to Jesus and say, *"Jesus, I trust in You."* Even if you think He is sleeping, have faith. Have trust. *"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?"* Luke 12:25, NIV.

Many times, we may look around at things that have happened and things to come and, in our human nature, we have momentary (or maybe more than momentary) fear and anxiety. By the time Paul entered Corinth, he had been stoned, beaten with rods, imprisoned, reviled, attacked by an angry mob, etc. He was afraid. He was so afraid that it was necessary for the Lord to appear to Him in a dream to calm his fear of going on. *"And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.'" Acts 18:9, 10 (ESV).* **He is with us. He will never leave us.** Our peace to go on is restored when we trust in Jesus, the one who can sleep through the storm because He trusts His Father and because Jesus knows that the storm is only what we see with our human eyes. Jesus wants us to have eyes that see beyond, into the spiritual. He wants us to have 'ears that hear' beyond the loudness of what we are told to believe, and to **know His voice** (My sheep know Me and listen to My voice). Dear friends, we can only know this voice by spending time with HIM. He speaks as we read His word. He ministers through His sacraments. He loves through one another. Just like any other relationship in

# PROPHECY UPDATE

**"do not despise prophetic utterances"**

*Be prepared to walk in my Light against this present darkness. I AM Light. I promised that I would not forget you. I have not. Don't ever believe that I have forgotten you.*

*Focus not on the darkness when it grows darker. Focus on Me, for I am Light and darkness cannot conquer the light that I give. You are light in the darkness. Keep your eyes on Me, your eternal Light, and declare that I am Light.*

*Know more clearly who I am. Study My attributes. Declare them to yourself and then to others. You defeat darkness with the Light of My Truth.*

*Hear with spiritual ears and see with spiritual eyes and trust in Me. Know that regardless of what you see with your human eyes or hear with your human ears, I am doing things that require spiritual eyes and ears to understand. Trust in Me in coming difficulties. I am always with you. I am making all things new. All things will be made new.*

*Faith calls things that are not as though they were.*

*You are mine. I take care of my sheep. I know them and they know Me. Keep your minds filled with My Word. Call on My Holy Spirit.. You are not alone. I have equipped you for spiritual battle. Do not be thrown. Stand firm.*

## upcoming events

### *First Saturday of the Month*

#### *Mass in honor of Our Lady*

9:00 AM at St. Gregory's, Northeast, PA

Sacred Music beginning at 8:50 AM

Music provided by: Soloist, Jacqueline Phillip;  
Violinist, Louis Nicolola and Organist Corey Spacht

## *Spirit Filled - Healing Mass*

**Sponsored by Son of God Prayer Group**

Tuesday October 6th

6:30 PM    Worship 6:15

**Holy Rosary Church 2701 East Ave, Erie**

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which we love someone, we cannot expect that relationship to grow or thrive, or to know the other person, unless we **spend time with them**. In a time of wolves circling His sheep and so many deceptions, now is a time to in which **we must know the voice of the Shepherd** because we listen to Him often. We are HIS sheep. We must know when HIS voice is beckoning us to turn away from something, to change our direction, to hold our course, and to 'stand firm' in the day of trouble/evil.

Importantly *"we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."* Eph 6:12 ESV. WE MUST FIGHT, PROTECTED BY SPIRITUAL ARMOUR, AND WITH SPIRITUAL WEAPONS. No matter how much we are lured into thinking that is it only a person or belief system causing a particular storm, these things only gain a spiritual foothold as the enemy succeeds in lying to people. We must see with spiritual eyes the spiritual battle that our region, country, and whole world is at war with. The war is serious, possibly the most serious in history. Make sure your armor is in good shape.

*"Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. **Stand firm** then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And **pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests**. With this in mind, be alert and **always keep on praying** for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6:13-18, NIV.*

Putting on the 'full armor' is not a cutesy habit of getting up in the morning imaging each piece of armor being on our body. Each piece of armor is a spiritual act that both protects and defeats. The belt of truth comes from the One who is the Truth, Jesus. Believe Truth. Speak Truth. Hold fast to Biblical Truth in these confusing times. The breastplate of righteousness is living a life of righteousness/holiness by living out the righteousness of Christ, which he exchanged for our sinfulness. *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* 2 Cor 5:21, NASB. Shoes shod in the gospel of peace allow us to **stand firm** because we have peace as we trust in everything the Jesus said and that died to overcome the enemy. The shield of faith is the thing that can be moved in any direction. It "extinguishes all the flaming arrows of the evil one." Make no mistake. The flaming arrows are flying with an intent to do mortal spiritual damage. But faith is a shield about us that thwarts all of those arrows. *"For the gospel reveals the righteousness of God that comes by faith from start to finish, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'"* Rom 1:17. Now pick up that sword that of the Holy Spirit, which is extensive familiarity with the Word of God. BE IN THE WORD. MEMORIZE THE WORD. It is *the only offensive weapon* mentioned. It is truth when that reading and that knowing is effectively directed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is necessary because the devil knows the Word better than any theologian or priest. He will attempt to use it against us just as he attempted to use it against Jesus in the desert. But Jesus followed the Holy Spirit to the correct Word at the correct time to address the battle. Jesus *swung that sword* and defeated the temptation of the devil. We must become adept at this. If the Word of God is on our mind, then we only need ask the Holy Spirit to *swing that sword* effectively. There are always physical steps that we need to take in our

lives in obedience to the spiritual battle, such as committing to frequent prayer and sacraments, showing forgiveness and mercy, demonstrating boldness, standing for God's truths that are unchangeable, and seeking justice for the poor and oppressed to mention only a handful, but it is a spiritual battle and Ephesians chapter 6 and the things that I just mentioned are weapons in that battle.

This voice of the Shepherd may one day lead you to difficult, life-changing decisions, such as whether you allow something into your body that was derived from an embryonic stem cells, or whether you will go to Mass, or whether to vote pro-abortion. If it creates extreme inconvenience, will it change your answer or will you continue to 'stand firm'? What if you are one day asked to renounce Jesus to save your life? Or the life of a loved one? Or for a bowl of hot soup or a blanket? I pray that it never comes to that in this country, *"the land of the free and the home of the brave."* Each of us must trust and have peace that at a moment such as that, God would give us a grace similar to Paul, the Apostles, and so many Saints and martyrs... the grace to follow the voice of our Good Shepherd.

*"Because of the multiplication of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold. But the one who **stands firm** to the end will be saved."* Matthew 24:12-13, Matthew 24:12-13, NIV. This is the goal that obtains the promise of eternal life. Let us 'stand firm' until the end, for none of us knows when that moment will be for any of us. We do know there are two promises that God reiterates time and again in His Word, especially in times of trouble. 1. I will never leave you 2. I will never forsake you Believe it with your whole being my dear friends. Have hope. Have love Have peace amidst the storm. Jesus is in the boat with us and He's not going anywhere.

***"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled."***

# AFRAID OF THE DARKNESS—KATHRYN WILCOX

Here are some random thoughts: I am afraid of contracting covid 19. I am afraid of the rioting in our country. I am even afraid of the dark - I cannot see anything when it is dark. I am afraid of the creepy crawlers that come out at night and I am afraid of the evil that seems to be present in the darkness.

But wait! Before I continue to list all my fears, especially the ones that darkness brings- let me explore some dictionary definitions:

**FEAR:** AN UNPLEASANT EMOTION CAUSED BY **THE BELIEF** THAT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IS DANGEROUS.

**DARKNESS:** THE TOTAL OR PARTIAL ABSENCE OF LIGHT. **EVIL:** THE ABSENCE OF GOOD

**WHAT?** So FEAR is caused by something that I believe? And DARKNESS is nothing but the absence of light? And Evil is the absence of GOOD? So my fears are generated by what I believe. Am I actually afraid of darkness and evil that are really just empty voids? How have I convinced myself to be afraid of these big nothings? My dear friend, Birgitta, always reminded me to "Doubt my doubts and believe my beliefs."

Why was that such good advice? Because there are no "doubts" in the bible- The bible is packed with what we BELIEVE. It is the bible that tells us 365 times to "be not afraid."

How can I believe that my fears are valid when the bible tells me over 100's of times to "be not afraid"?

It is LIGHT that dispels darkness. I remember being in the old section of Mammoth Cave, which was as big as a football field. They turned off the lights and I could not even see my hand in front of my face. Then the guide lit one match. Suddenly we could see each other, and actually, the whole room of the cave. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. He fills the void of the darkness with His light and love. Evil can only occupy the void when man does not have God's love present in his heart.

So what do I do when I am afraid?

1. Recognize that I am being tempted to fear.
2. Pray and ask Jesus to send the Holy Spirit, His light will fill the void of the darkness. There is power in the name of Jesus, and in Jesus name, claim authority over fear any evil you are sensing.
3. Read, memorize and speak scripture: Yes, demons and satan are real, but Jesus used scripture


to resist the temptations of satan in the desert and ultimately defeated satan's power in the world by His death on the cross.

The first chapter of John's Gospel refers to Jesus as "the Word." In verse 1 we read, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* In verse 14 we find, *"And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."* 2 Timothy 1:7 *"For God hath not given us the spirit of cowardice; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."* Joshua 1-9. *"I command you: be strong and steadfast! Do not fear nor be dismayed, for the Lord, your God, is with you wherever you go."*

It is also worth noting that when I wrote down my fears for this article instead of just thinking of my fears and keeping them hidden, they did not seem nearly as scary. My mind, and those demons who like to torment me, seem to make mountains out of molehills.

Remember: "Be not afraid" is in the bible 365 times!!!!!! So, BE NOT AFRAID.

*All Scriptural references from NABRE*



**Do not be  
afraid, I  
am with  
you**

Isaiah 43:5

# FREEDOM AND THE APOSTLE THOMAS

By Fr. Marc Stockton (St. Boniface)

*This year two celebrations fell on the same day. On the calendar of federal holidays, we celebrated Independence Day. But on the Church's calendar, we celebrated the feast of Thomas the apostle. These two events may seem unrelated at first glance, but look closer, and we see that they are at heart inseparable. In one, we celebrate the rights we enjoy as free, American citizens. In the other, we celebrate the ultimate foundation of those rights and freedoms as citizens of the household of God. The former cannot endure without the latter, as those who wrote and signed the Declaration of Independence knew, but which too many Americans today have either forgotten or were never even been taught.*

*On Independence Day, we celebrate the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the spiritual birth of our nation. But our nation is not founded on a 244-year-old piece of paper, nor on the flawed human beings who wrote and signed it. Our nation is founded on an unshakable belief in the fundamental, unalienable rights of human beings, which find their source and goal in God. Our rights are unalienable precisely because they come from God, and only He has the power to change them or take them away; not other people, not popular or political movements, not the spirit of the times, not even governments. Only God. Now, we can and must grow as a nation in our understanding of these rights, just as we did with the rightful abolition of slavery and the approval of women's suffrage, as some examples. But no power in heaven or on earth can take away or change our rights except God. That is the fundamental belief which gave our nation birth.*

*So what happens when we as a nation abandon that foundational belief? What happens when we remove God from the equation? From where do our rights come then? Then they really do come from pieces of paper, crafted and imposed upon us by flawed human beings who have the popular and political might to redefine our rights however they see fit. Such rights, if they can even be called that, can never be unalienable. They can be changed with the stroke of a pen by whichever over-bearing person has the power to do so, whether it be a single tyrant, or a ruthless group. If the belief that God has endowed human beings with certain unalienable rights gave birth to our nation, abandoning that belief would be its death.*

*Which brings us back to the feast of Thomas the apostle. The first reading of his feast day reminds us that, above and before citizenship in any country, we are "fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the capstone. Through Him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred to the Lord." We must never forget that we are citizens of heaven above all else; that is our purpose and goal in this life. And when we base our national citizenship and our exercise of the rights we enjoy as Americans on our true citizenship in pursuit of that goal, then and only then will we be truly independent and free, even from the power of death, just as Christ and his apostles. We will be free from fear and free to stand up to the oppressors and tyrants of our time, just as the founders of our nation stood up so long ago.*

*So, in recognition of the co-celebration of Independence Day on the feast of St. Thomas that happened this year, may we remember where our true independence comes from, where our ultimate citizenship lies, and work for the day when both will be fully realized by fighting for the God-given rights of all as citizens of the United States.*





*"Come to Jesus!"*

# Adoration Worship Concert

Thursday 9/17/20  
7-9:00pm  
St George's Church  
5145 Peach, Erie

*"And when these  
things begin  
to come to pass,  
look up! and lift  
up your heads;  
for your redemption  
draweth nigh"  
Luke 21:28*



Vocalist: Jaci Phillips, Violinist: Louis Nicolai, Organist:  
Bruce Gingrich, & Worship by Harmony's House



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**Presider: Fr Jonathan Schmolt**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2020  
7 PM - 9 PM  
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH  
5145 PEACH ST ERIE PA**



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# Reflections

on 'The Greater Things'

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Please call before coming.

The purpose of this newsletter is to proclaim  
the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to provide  
teaching, news, and calendar of events, which  
help to foster Catholic Charismatic Renewal  
throughout the Diocese of Erie.

This newsletter may be copied to put in  
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### FORMATTING

Loretta Laufer

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