

I really don't like to use generalizations, especially when it comes to male or female roles and expectations.

That being said, I have found that most men I have met feel secure in most things. I realize this could be a product of machismo or bagado, or it could be the byproduct of how society sees men as breadwinners, or heads of the family.

Women seem to desire security, that is they don't all feel secure in most things, but they very much want to. This lack of certainty in their security could be a product of generations of women being told you need a man to make you secure.

In either case, feeling secure and being secure are two different things.

We live in a time where security is a fragile thing.

Worldwide hunger and poverty destroys confidence. Political upheaval threatens to change what little security we might have.

Many Americans live paycheck to paycheck. The availability of almost instant divorce threatens the security we should have in our marital bonds. Wars and conflicts, by their very nature, destroy hope.

I'm not up here to make a list bad stuff in our world, we are all aware of them, some more intimately than others.

The bottom line here is that, in matters of economy, politics, relationships... all things of this fragile world, none of us is immune from feelings of insecurity because we have no real control over these things.

Today's Gospel should give us hope that there is security in our relationship with God and that security flows through us in all we do.

Like this coin, the baptised, by God's grace, live in the closed fist of the Son of God and in the grip of the Father.

If any one of you should want to take this coin from me, it would take concerted effort. I'm not all that strong, but the love and protection of God is stronger than any other person.

This security is given in absolute love, not only God's love for us, but in the love between the Father and the Son.

God's love is unconditional - no doubt about that. But this grip that God has on us, for our good and for the glory of God, is somewhat provisional.

I'll say that another way. Remembering that God's love for us is always absolute, we have considerable control of this relationship of divine security.

God, in creating us, gives us free will. He not only gives it, He respects it.

So when we do things we shouldn't do, this bond between myself and God can weaken.

Little lies, little thefts, petite wrongdoings have a way of growing, of multiplying and of hardening our hearts. And a hardened heart is fertile ground for mortal sin and mortal sin removes us, not from God's love, but from Grace.

Outside of that grace we lie, cheat, steal, slander and blaspheme. With each layer of sin, we, not He, WE weaken this bond until the evil one steals the soul.

The Good News is that God still loves us absolutely and He desires to pour into us grace upon grace upon grace and so He has given us the ways and means of initiating repair of the relationship and from preventing its destruction in the first place.

If our free will is complicit in the loosening of this bond, then it is also the key to repairing it. It is an exercise in free will to repent and to enter into the confessional where the relationship is immediately healed.

What is now need to do is to preserve this union between ourselves and God.

In order to do that we must follow the voice of Jesus the Good Shepherd.

That voice is heard in the proclaiming and the reading and the living out of Holy Scripture and of reception of the Sacraments. Of allowing the Holy Spirit to move our hearts in the direction of the Son's voice and to strengthen us to follow it and to prod us to more immediate repentance, of even the smallest of sins, training the ears of our soul to hear and its desire to follow.

Eventually, by God's Grace, though there might still be small sins as is natural to our fallen state, the holy grip of the Son and the Father can be maintained, by our awareness to sin and efforts to avoid it, until we are given the **security** of heaven.