

FEAR IS A LOUSY STRATEGY DEALING WITH DIVORCE!

One of the most common reactions to divorce is fear. That is very understandable. Who wouldn't be scared if their entire life came crashing down around them?

The problem with fear is not being scared, that's normal. The problem is acting on fear. That's when fear becomes a lousy strategy. I have seen time and again how people take matters into their own hands and act on this fear. Bad choices almost always occur.

Here are some examples (you can probably relate to some, or all, of these—and maybe even come up with a few of your own!).

- It is the forty-something woman who thinks she is too old to attract a man and the only chance she has to not be alone the rest of her life is to give in to sexual advances.
- It is the man who remarries a year after his divorce because he is afraid of being alone.
- It is the person who marries outside the Church because they are afraid of the annulment process.

All these actions are based on fear, and all are heading for heartbreak and despair. This is not what God wants for you, that's for sure.

Here is a better strategy: **hope**. Hope is not about ignoring the reality of being afraid. It is not some mind/psych game you play to pretend you are not afraid. Hope is acknowledging your fear and then making a decision to totally trust God. It is putting the fear into God's hands and allowing Him to carry it for you, relieving you of the burden. *The fundamental ingredient of hope is trust*. It is about trusting that God has not, and never will, abandon you. It is trusting that He is walking with you through this extremely painful, lonely, and discouraging time in your life. It is trusting that He really does want you to have an abundance of peace and joy, and that He has a great plan for you to get it—even though you may have no idea what that plan is.

Focusing on trust really does help to move past the fear of the present and look forward to a very positive, hopeful, future.

Be on guard against making choices out of fear. When you feel fear feeling creeping into your life, it is time to hit the pause button. Take that fear to God in prayer. Tell God that you are afraid, even terrified. Ask for the grace to trust Him more.

Pray for the virtue of courage to do the right thing, even if that means doing nothing. This often requires the most courage because doing nothing really is trusting in God and not in yourself. The more you are able to trust, the more you are moving down the pathway straight to God's will. And that, my friend, is where peace and joy reign supreme.

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Ascension has a ministry of support for those going through the pain and suffering of separation or divorce. Please contact Jean in the office for more info.