

The other day I used my last paper towel on the roll, looking in the pantry I discovered “that cupboard was bare” too. Undaunted, I went to the shelving in the basement and found an unopened case of paper towels. Then I smiled. I remembered buying them maybe a year ago? I think it was the beginning of the “tariffs” and the little world I live in was in post-pandemic shock and the word on the street was hurry, stock up on paper goods while you can still get them. The paper towels were right next to the case of toilet tissues. I flashed on Chicken Little. An amused voice in my head was shouting “the sky is falling, the sky is falling.” How many times have we responded to a perceived threat with fear? After 9/11 I know my husband was not the only person to start stockpiling food and supplies in the event we had to go “live off the grid.” Our present day world has changed so much in recent years that many of us live in a constant state of what’s next. Adrenaline never seems to drop. So hearing “the sky is falling” makes me giggle and ponder.

The tale of Chicken Little before the animated movie that was made in 2023, is actually a European folk tale known as Henny Penny. In the story, Chicken Little is hit on the head by an acorn, doesn’t look to see what it was, just panics and starts running to all her friends, “the sky is falling, the sky is falling.” Panic thus ensues for all her friends and they ultimately run into the fox’s den as he promised them shelter. It did not end well for them. The tale in some form has been around for over 25 centuries. Does this speak to a less brave and thoughtful nature of human beings?

The nightly news and nonstop social media posts are way more tantalizing when the story is scary or horrid. Fear raises the bottom profit line for advertisers much more than heartwarming stories of sunshine. What drives our obsessive fascination with fear?

The 23rd psalm speaks of walking through the valley of the shadow of death and fearing no evil. Isaiah 41:10 says “Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God.” When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, his words were Fear not, you have found favor with God. Jesus told his disciples and anyone else who would listen to “Take Courage, be not afraid.” He often chose challenging times too...out on the water during a storm, at the transfiguration on the mount to mention a few.

Each new day the sun rises, we may not see it for the clouds, but we know it rises. We know the cycles of nature, the flow of the seasons, the tides of the oceans. There is a power, a source of all this life, and it is not in human form, it is not a country, no matter what some may claim. The love and goodness that created all life, is just that, goodness and love. It doesn’t mean bad will not happen, of course it will we cannot have one without the other, but each dawn reminds me of who is really in charge. And when we sit still long enough and listen, that truth becomes known to each of us.

After my husband passed I emptied out the “end of the world” storage shed. The next time I start to stock up on whatever good value item it seems I need to take stock of, I will bear in mind, that whatever the latest fear is, it too will pass. If just one of Chicken Little’s friends had said wait, where is that piece of sky that fell on your head, they may have reacted in a different way. We have God. We have Jesus. We have the Holy Spirit. Fear not.

