

**‘ DO NOT BE AFRAID . . .’**

**During this inaugural address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to calm and comfort a troubled nation by assuring them that “. . . THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF.”** Be that as it may, most of us would readily admit to being afraid of something. It may be as simple as having a phobia for insects, or as complicated as being haunted by a fear of growing old or dying. Fear may be defined as being an emotional response to perceived threats, and we certainly understand that emotions are sometimes difficult to keep in check. If controlled, fear can be an invaluable tool in building a strong character. The real danger to our well-being, however, lies in worries and anxieties that are allowed to consume us.

**We must make every effort to REPLACE OUR FEARS WITH FAITH, and not permit despair to overcome us. How many times in the Gospels do we find our Lord instructing His followers not to be afraid? How often does He tell them not to worry: that their Father in heaven will take care of them? How can we ever forget His admonition: “ Which of you by worrying can add on cubit to his stature?” (Matthew 6:27)**

**Our faith can be of tremendous help in eliminating undue fear. In the Psalms, we are repeatedly told to “TRUST IN THE LORD.”** Throughout both Testaments, we find numerous examples of people who blindly placed their lives in God’s hands, and were ultimately blessed for doing so. Those who are able to “commend their lives to Christ”, as we are asked to do at every Divine Liturgy, will find themselves free from the tensions that can do irreparable damage to our souls.