



September 17, 2008

A pastoral letter from Bishop Frade

Dearly Beloved:

In the past month we have seen a series of hurricanes battering our neighbors in the Caribbean and across the Gulf Coast; and now we are feeling that all of us are in the path of a financial storm. Indeed, these are anxious times, and we may feel like crying with the psalmist, “Lord, how many adversaries I have!”

I know that for many of you the events that unfolded this past Monday brought much anxiety. Many in America who have stakes in the stock market worried as Lehman Brothers announced that their company had filed for bankruptcy and that Merrill Lynch had been acquired in a fire sale by the Bank of America. As your bishop I have been concerned about this crisis produced by an excessive and unregulated expansion of credit that has burst another financial bubble, reminding us of Yogi Berra’s famous comment, “It’s like déjà vu all over again.

As your bishop I want to remind you at this time of turmoil: “Be not afraid.” We serve the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth, and we and all human institutions, even the financial markets, are in his hand and cannot ever be beyond the reach of his loving care.

The next thing I want you to know is that our diocesan Investment Committee continues exercising very wise and careful stewardship of the funds that have been entrusted to us. This committee met last Friday and again on Monday with representatives of the firm that currently handles our investments, and has been assured that our investments of diocesan and parish funds—your money, our money, God’s money are secure.

I think that this is also a good time to be reminded of the need to revise our priorities. In recent years I have seen how greed has taken over many of our political and financial institutions. The 1987 movie *Wall Street* became too much of a reality in our country, blinding and deceiving many to behave in ways that were extremely irresponsible and destructive of both national and international economies. Unlike what some believe, the winner is not the one “who dies with the most toys.” I can assure we will do much better when we meet our maker if we show him how much we have done for others and the world, rather than showing him how well we did for ourselves without caring for others.

We are called to be ministers of the transforming love of Jesus Christ in the midst of all these worrisome circumstances. Let us reach out with our prayers, our material goods, our helping hands and our presence to serve all of our neighbors, near and far, who are overwhelmed by adversity and fear.

I urge you to be aware of those in our midst who have lost a job, or are in danger of losing a house, or are overwhelmed with debt. Be a friend to them in every way you can. I will also remind you of the recent appeal I made to aid those who have been affected by this season's storms by sending your donation to Episcopal Charities or by making a donation online at www.diosef.org.

Lastly, I ask your prayers also for guidance for the leaders of our nation, our President, our Congress and especially for our Treasury Secretary, Henry Paulson, as they help us to recover from the present crisis.

Beloved, in this time, as in all times of anxiety, trust in God, be faithful in prayer, be of good courage---and be Christ's Body in the world!

Blessings,

+Leo Frade
Bishop of Southeast Florida