

2003-14-09
Fear of Flying

Mark Belletini

Opening Words

We are here
to be lifted above our daily routines

bound together in common destiny,

Life has given us great gifts, and, sadly, has also taken those gifts away. Still, let every human soul take courage enough to wal 507 a

obstruct their programs.

At the hour of Alarm

you shall be with me

you shall be my refuge on the day of the Bomb

To those who believe not

in the lies of their commercial messages,

nor in their publicity campaigns,

Later in the fall I will fly all the way to Germany to give a speech and deliver a sermon.

But for three decades I have hated to fly. I am simply afraid of flying. Or, in the more precise words of Erica Jong who wrote the famous book *Fear of Flying*, I am afraid of crashing. I literally shake in my shoes every time the plane takes off or lands. If there is turbulence of any kind, I am the person making the most

everything is bigger down there... where the plane felt no more substantial than a foil gum wrapper in a wind tunnel. I don't think my eyes, which were as big as dinner plates, closed for two weeks after that one.

It all came down to trust, I realized. Trust. Faith in someone else.
Confidence.

I don't know the pilots personally, of course. I can't have a
personal faith in them. I have never even shaken their hand

love or honesty after several significant betrayals? How can anyone trust the very idea of family after a childhood of neglect or domestic violence? How can anyone trust the concept of marriage itself when so many relationships have not worked out? Coming back to trust after such things is a long and difficult personal

no more real than the tooth fairy. Others

I also trust those people, either as groups or individuals, who champion the side of innate human dignity, who are partisan toward a justice not based on the number of corpses piled in the plaza. I do not trust those powerful souls who are cavalier about human life, who see the death of those with a different philosophy as a necessary evil. The psalm you heard this morning makes my case strongly. It's by Fr. Ernesto Cardenal, the Minister of Culture in Nicaragua after the successful revolution in 1979. It is a strong, partisan set of words, written back in the sixties during the earlier revolution against the elder Somoza. Based on the emotional Biblical psalms, Cardenal's *Psalms* were used throughout the Americas after he wrote them, used by people oppressed by dictators and juntas during those years. The oppressed saw these magnificent psalms as honest emotional expressions of life set against death, and hope set against despair. They took the ancient biblical text and made it relevant to a world full of Somozas, Pinochets, Death Squads, and yes, Kissingers.

Yes, Kissingers. Why him?

Well, the people of Chile, you see, remember September 11th this past week not just as the day when planes crashed into buildings and fields up here in North America. This year, Sept 11th marked the 30th anniversary of the murder of the democratically-elected president of Chile in South America, by name, Salvador Allende. This bloody and monstrous coup was initially *called for, and supported* by, the president of our United States, but it was clearly arranged by Mr. Kissinger, as recently declassified documents show quite clearly. When told that Augusto Pinochet had killed over 4000 people in a stadium just days after the coup, Mr. Kissinger said that such deaths were less important than "*our*

nonchalant. Maybe it's because I have been lucky enough to travel abroad, and thus I personally know many good people in Chile who suffered due to the America

suburbs. Take in the *spirit* of Cardenal's psalm, the assertion that there's something basic, something ultimate in the universe, signed by the word *Lord*, which insists that no one should trust the "publicity campaigns, memorandums, and policies" of those who buy power with death, and time with terror.

Now you will correctly remind me that people like Cardenal worked almhTc 2iwill correctlyNd

You see the very same Ali Keyhani who taught me about trust flew in a plane on 9/11, 2001. He was originally intending to go to Los Angeles, but at the last minute changed his mind to save time, and flew to Albuquerque instead. Had he stayed on the plane to Los Angeles leaving from Boston, he would not be here. His would have been one of the four planes which crashed into -08j 0 Tw (Ang) -0 1i50ra

