

22. I can never know for sure that my family will be safe.

Romans 8:37-39

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

One of the scariest things about 2nd June was that many of us were separated from other members of our families. There was a scramble to contact loved ones.

It must have been distressing for the workers inside Sellafield who were unable to contact loved ones to check they were okay. Others were frustrated by the overloaded mobile phone networks.

Some people were particularly upset by the events because they had their children with them near the gunman. The thought of what could have happened is appalling.

After the Asian Tsunami there was a story of a father running up the beach, carrying his children, trying to escape the wave. I find that story chilling, partly because it brings home to me the fact that there are things I can't protect my children from. With three children, limited arm strength and a giant wave, I would be powerless.

We can never know for sure that our loved ones will be safe. That makes some people overprotective. Of course, given how little control we actually have that is an outcome as pointless as it is frustrating.

How can we live without fear when we know that those we love most are vulnerable?

Today's reading is the climax of the climactic eighth chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Romans: Christ's death has secured forgiveness for all who believe; his resurrection has guaranteed that we will share in his glorious future; the gift of the Holy Spirit has made us sons of God; even the bad things that happen to us will be turned to good.

Can *anything* separate us from this infinite love? I like to imagine Paul standing on the highest mountain, shouting out the challenge to any one or anything bold enough to try: "Life, death, angels, demons?" No, they can't separate us from Christ's love. "Present, future, height, depth – is there any thing in all creation able to separate us from him?" No, there is nothing that can separate the believer from the love of Christ.

In fact, when these threats arise on our horizon God makes us, "More than conquerors" through Christ. In other words, we don't just survive; God makes the hardships we face actually serve our growth in Christ.

Let's think this through in relation to our loved ones. If nothing can separate me from Christ, and nothing can separate you from Christ, then you and I will be united in him forever.

Come what may, a family joined together in him will never ultimately be separated.

