

At a trial this week the jury has received a transcript of voices from flight 93 in the minutes before it fell to the earth on September 11, 2001. On the tape can be heard people pleading for their lives, screaming in fear, fighting off hijackers, and gasping for air. No one wants to imagine what that felt like – to know that you were innocent, your enemies were in control, and your death was certain. But in that circumstance, what would you have said? If your last words had appeared on that tape, what would they have been?

Jesus himself was in a similar situation on the cross. He was innocent, yet his enemies were taking his life. The last words of Jesus have been preserved in the gospels. One of these phrases, according to Luke, was a quote from today's responsorial psalm. It shows no fear, no anger, and no panic. Jesus says, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." I don't think I would have that kind of peacefulness in the same situation. It is a remarkable statement. Jesus simply turns his life over to God. The psalm says, "You are my God. In your hands is my destiny; rescue me."

When we are placed in an impossible situation, we often become angry and fearful. We want anyone – friend, enemy or God – to make things different. This psalm realizes things are very bad, but it also realizes that God is very just. In some mysterious way God will come to the rescue. It may not be the way we had hoped for, but God will rescue us in a way beyond hope.

We are powerless to change some things. But we can always change our attitude from fear to trust. It means learning to say, even in the most challenging circumstances, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."