

Strength Over Fear

Before St. Polycarp was executed, soldiers gave him every chance to escape or compromise.

He didn't run.

He didn't fear what people could do to him.

His strength came from the Holy Spirit, not from himself.

Today, Shieldbearers look honestly at fear, and how the Holy Spirit helps them rise above it—not by becoming fearless, but by becoming faithful.

Prompt 1 — What Fear Looks Like in Me

“Write one thing that makes you feel afraid, anxious, or uneasy.”

Prompt 2 — How Fear Affects My Choices

“When this fear hits, what do you do?

Do you avoid? Panic? Stay silent? Change yourself to fit in?”

Prompt 3 — What Strength Would Look Like

“Write what a strong, Holy-Spirit-led response would look like in that situation.”

“One Courage Step”

Today, each Shieldbearer chooses one small act of courage connected to the fear they named:

- Do something even if you're afraid
- Say the honest thing
- Admit the truth
- Refuse to follow negative pressure
- Ask someone trustworthy for help
- Stand beside someone who needs support

Small steps develop strong disciples.

““Holy Spirit, strengthen me when I am afraid.
Give me courage in my heart and peace in my mind.
Help me stand firm like St. Polycarp.
Amen.”