Friggatriskaidekaphobia

By Chaplain Allen Vaughan

Are you afraid of Friday the 13th? If you refuse to step out of the house, won't travel or buy anything new, or if you stop to think twice before doing anything on this date, then you may suffer from "*friggatriskaidekaphobia*," which is the scientific term for fear of Friday the 13th. *Frigga* after the Norse goddess for whom Friday is named; *triskaideka* is the Greek word for thirteen; and *phobia* is the Greek word for fear.

It is estimated that businesses in the United States lose a total of $800-900 million on this day, because of people who won't fly, travel or buy anything on Friday the 13th. There are a variety of explanations as to why Friday the 13th came to have such a bad reputation, but it is actually a combination of two ancient associations with bad luck.

Long before "TGIF" became the rally cry for the end of the work week, Friday was seen as the unluckiest day of the week. For Christians, it is believed that Jesus was crucified on a Friday. And, for Sailors in the olden days, it was considered unlucky to start a voyage on Friday.

Then there is the unlucky number "13." In many ancient cultures, the number twelve was considered a number of completeness, and it was believed that something evil or bad would happen to the "thirteenth" in order to restore the balance. Also, witches were thought to gather in groups of twelve, and the devil was the thirteenth in attendance. Formula One racing won't allow any car to be assigned the number 13, and some hotels won't number the thirteenth floor out of concern that people would refuse to stay in those rooms.

"Friggatriskaidekaphobia" is the scientific term for fear of Friday the 13th. *Frigga* after the Norse goddess for whom Friday is named; *triskaideka* is the Greek word for thirteen; and *phobia* is the Greek word for fear.

No thanks to the hockey mask-wearing movie character, "Jason," Friday the 13th will always be associated with bad luck and superstition. I've got to admit that there are times when I pause to think, "Whoa, it's Friday the 13th, so I had better be careful!"

Are you superstitious? Have you ever avoided walking under a ladder, and does opening an umbrella indoors make you nervous? Do you throw salt over your shoulder when the salt shaker spills, carry a lucky rabbit's foot, or do you spin around three times in a counterclockwise direction to avoid the seven years bad luck brought about by a broken mirror?

Some of our most stubborn and persistent superstitions may seem silly, but they have their basis in many of our deeply held beliefs. Even as we grow older, and recognize some of these as irrational and childish, still, it is hard to hold down the urge to hold your breath when passing a graveyard or knock on wood in hope that something you say won't come true.

Likewise, we have some long-held beliefs and fears that have an impact on our relationships with family, friends and coworkers. If you came to believe or fear, as a child, that the people you love will leave you, then when you get married, it is hard not to convince yourself that your spouse will eventually leave you, too. If you were criticized or teased as a child, then you may have to fight the feeling that everyone is "out to get you" at work.

Psychologists acknowledge that beliefs affect our behavior. Donald Dossey, founder of the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute in Asheville, N.C., states: "What you think about, you begin to feel. What you feel generates what you do. And what you do creates how you will become."

The Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

So, the next time you find that you are fighting some of those old fears and superstitions - and I don't just mean on Friday the 13th, but perhaps some old voices from the past speaking negative thoughts or bringing up old fears - then think about those things which are excellent and praiseworthy. Don't worry about being lucky or unlucky. Dwell upon whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely and admirable. And then, just wait for the peace of God to come flooding into the place where your fears used to be.

Solid yellow painted curbs

From CFAY Traffic Safety Office

In our first days of arriving in Japan, we all get to sit through a cultural class to learn how to conduct ourselves here in many different situations. Part of that class includes how to safely drive in Japan and many of the things we all must be aware of to ensure our safety and that of others while driving.

One of the discussion topics is painted markings, one of which is yellow curbs. One would think, since yellow curbs in the United States mean no parking or stopping or a fire hydrant is there, it would mean the same in Japan… right?

Well, if you agree, you are correct. In Japan, if the curb is painted a solid yellow there is no stopping or parking, so with that said, there should be no tire marks on any of these curbs. On base, I want to give people the benefit of the doubt and say they want to see how durable the curb paint is by just checking once in a while with the tires but then reality comes into play. They are actually knowingly disobeying the laws they were taught, because to legally park it is inconvenient or because some else did it, they want to do it too.

These curbs are yellow for a good reason; safety, safety for yourself and others. Often we don't think about how our actions can affect others, which is why the curbs are yellow and the laws are in place.

Aside from fire hydrants, curbs are also yellow due to limited lane space for passing by, pedestrian visibility and allowing space for vehicles to enter and exit parking spaces or driveways. Remember, solid yellow curbs mean "no parking and no stopping." A sign that has a red circle around the outside edge and two red slash lines with a blue center means the same. You may see one or the other in place. No matter what you see, weather it is the painted curb or a post mounted sign, find another place to stop or park your car.