

Fr. Rudy's Reflections

The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

January 21, 2024

Getting Out of the Boat

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

It is true to say that we are living in a complex, literal world where our daily lives leave us little time to develop our imagination or follow a different course. We read the news, we enjoy nonfiction, we watch endless hours of reality television and 24-hour newscasts, and we are prompted to follow a path of rote acceptance. We let secular society dictate our focus and blind us to alternatives. Indeed, we are affected by all we see, all we hear, and all we experience, and through this labyrinth, we allow this grim world to disturb our hearts.

Yes, even as Christians, we can be negatively affected by the realities we face each day. Do we pray? Sometimes, we do. Are we inspired to expand our knowledge base or try to look at life from a different perspective? Perhaps, we do at times. Are we hurt by life? Often, it seems. And sometimes without warning or provocation, we just let the world beat us up.

And yet it is so difficult to change course as we navigate through difficult waters and circumstances beyond our control. Maybe, just maybe, we need to get out of the boat we are on and onto the shore, and follow someone who can truly make a difference in our lives. Perhaps we need to consider Jesus's words today that he uttered to James, John, Andrew, and Peter: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." *How did these men know immediately* and follow Jesus into an uncertain future, where they had no idea where it would lead? They were ordinary men, as ordinary as *we* are, yet their unwavering faith in Jesus Christ enflamed their hearts instantly. They dropped their nets and transformed their lives. The world was still a hostile place for them, yet through these men as time progressed, the world was changed for the better. Could we *change the world for the better by choosing a path to Christ* without wanting to run back to the boat and pick up our nets because it might be more difficult to do?

The Good News of Jesus Christ is still present in our world today. Just look around you, seek its beauty and your will find what you are looking for. It's not in riches or rewards or anything one can hold onto in this world. In Jesus, the truth will always remain the same and we can find real answers to carry in our hearts for all eternity.

On this Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, let us ponder the words of Pope Francis:

"He looks for us where we are, he loves us as we are, and he patiently walks by our side. As he did with those fishermen, he waits for us on the shore of our life. With his word, he wants to change us, to invite us to live fuller lives and put out into the deep together with him. . . To be able to do this, let us ask the Lord, for the strength to turn off the television, and open the Bible. . . It will make us feel God's closeness to us and fill us with courage as we make our way through life."

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy