

Fr. Rudy's Reflections

The Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 4, 2024

A Day in the Life

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

There is a popular literary genre called “day in the life” found in films, journalism, and novels that describes events and activities of a single day in a subject’s life. This snapshot-of-reality is employed to capture revealing details and perhaps an overall theme so an audience can understand who this person truly is. Surprisingly, part of the first chapter of the Gospel of Mark (16-39) is an example of this type of literary device, one that consolidates Jesus’s transformative power into one important day in his life at the beginning of his ministry.

Today is the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time, and we are continuing to highlight Mark’s Gospel, now moving from the calling of his first followers by the Sea of Galilee (and its urgency) and the synagogue in Capernaum (for his preaching) to subsequent encounters that demonstrated his ability to heal and mend the mind, body, and soul of one and all. Jesus began by healing one person, Simon’s mother-in-law, and eventually thousands gathered and were drawn to his ministry—*all in the same day*. On the following morning he acted again: first, with a solitary prayer vigil, affirming the guidance and direction he continually sought from God, and second, resolving to preach throughout the whole of Galilee to restore the soul of his community (and, ultimately, to all mankind).

Today’s Gospel completes a picture of Jesus’ transformative and divine authority. His actions, centered on preaching, curing the sick, driving out demons, and then moving on (to continue his work in another place), intricately weave his holistic approach to well-being—physical, mental, and spiritual—to transcend mere words and deeds. His teaching and his life offer us the sustenance of truth, beauty, peace, and the path to eternal life. Living our faith in Jesus Christ, we can cleanse our spiritual abrasions and restore harmony in both body and soul by all we do in his name.

As we try to make sense in this troubled, oppressed world, in Jesus’s divine presence, we can find what we seek and yearn for, and in turn, extend our grateful hearts in love, compassion, and renovation to those we encounter—all in his name. St. Teresa of Calcutta has said: “Find your own Calcutta. Find the sick, the suffering, the lonely, right there where you are—in your own homes and in your own families, in your workplaces and schools.” Just like the first apostles, we can get out of our boats and find those who need us, all with a sense of our own spirituality that will truly light our paths. This year, perhaps consider doing something out of the ordinary. Whether volunteering at a food bank, distributing the Eucharist to the sick and suffering, or devoting oneself to a more committed prayer life, what you choose to do will undoubtedly enhance your faith life. Consider chronicling your own “day in a life” and see how your own sense of purpose might indeed help to light this weary world.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Rudy