

Fr. Rudy's Reflection

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 25, 2023

We are called to be action figures

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

With increasing frequency, it is clear that we live in a secular world, where the mere mention of God many times causes our fellow Christians to back away out of fear of reprisals and repercussions. Many of us in the face of expressing our religious views often stay silent because we are afraid our faith might be a personal affront to someone else's disparate and more vocal views. We prevaricate by saying we are Christians, and we are here to love each other. Yet, does this commitment to love and acceptance disqualify us from proclaiming the mission of Christ as he has commissioned us to do?

In these disquiet moments, when we wring our hands, look downward, and decide if we should speak or stay silent, Jesus has said, "Fear no one." Yes, silence is not always golden; sometimes it's the gray, colorless matter we express to concede to the loud voices who do not wish for us to be heard. We operate out of fear as we relinquish the grace and strength given to us by Jesus Christ. We acquiesce, we fold, we sit on our hands, and we allow attitudes of secularity to take a stronger hold on our society.

On this Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, in this last week of June, let us reflect on Matthew's Gospel that continues Jesus's discourse to his apostles, written to coincide with the persecution of the early Christian communities who pursued their faith in the face of great opposition. In Matthew's brief verses, the phrase, "Do not fear," appears three times. Jesus declares, "What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna" (Matthew 10:27-28).

We must continue to pray for the courage and persistence to pursue a course in life that honors Jesus's love and his sacrifice to the world for our salvation. We might want to live in a bubble and not react to the events around us that seem to celebrate the unseemly side of life, yet we are called to be action figures who fight for the faith. We must put into practice what we profess and believe, despite our inclination to promote love and forgiveness. These virtues do not eliminate the need for accountability.

"Do not fear the conflict, do not flee it, where there is no struggle, there is no virtue, where faith and love are not tempted, it is not possible to be sure whether they are really present. They are proved and revealed in adversity."—St. John Chrysostom

Yours in Christ,
Father Rudy