

Fr Rudy's Reflections

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 1, 2023

Follow Through for Your Faith

My Brothers and Sisters in the Risen Lord,

It is true to say we all lead busy lives and because we do, our best intentions sometimes cause us to promise things we have not the incentive to deliver. When someone asks us to do something, we may falter, disappoint, and fail to follow through. Are we a bad person? No, but for the one who has asked for our help or positive action, we are not a person who honors our word. We must ask ourselves these important questions: Does our inaction hinge on its lack of importance to us—in other words, do we fail because we are not truly invested in the task? Do our own self-interests and ego trump our commitment to another person or another cause?

On this Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus describes, through a parable, what he is asking us in terms of devotion to our faith. The parable of the father and his two sons, one who initially refuses his father's request but later obeys it, and the other who readily agrees to the request but fails to follow through, speaks volumes about the significance of action versus words. We all like to think we are virtuous, kind, loving, and faithful to our faith. Yet, in this example, it reminds us that faith is not measured by the eloquence of our words or promises we make but by the genuine commitment to doing God's will. Our faith is not proven by declarations but by the sincerity of our actions. The famous Nike slogan, "Just Do It," echoes this Gospel's message beautifully. It encourages us, as well, to embrace a quiet humility in everything we do that mirrors the character of Jesus Christ.

As we reflect on Matthew's Gospel, we should consider whether we emulate the son who loudly proclaims intentions but falls short in action or the other who silently, deliberately obeys and demonstrates faith through deeds. Our Lord wants us to act always with integrity, compassion, and selflessness. And in this light, we should consider acts of anonymity in the process. Doing things out of pureness of intention rather than recognition are rooted in the quiet humility that Jesus exemplified throughout his life. It is truly anathema to our faith to be the first hand raised to volunteer, shout our goodness to the rooftop, and then fall short of our goals. We must be true to our word, true to our faith.

*"Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak."—St. Anthony of Padua*

*"To his exhortation to unity, [St.] Paul adds a call to humility, saying: 'Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others' (Phil 2:3-4). Christian life is a life for others: existing for others, humble service of neighbour and of the common good."—Pope Benedict XVI*

Yours in Christ,

Father Rudy