

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Today, the Holy Church places before us a Gospel that is both consoling and challenging.

In Matthew 10:26–33, Jesus speaks to His Apostles before sending them out on mission. He does not hide the reality of suffering, rejection, and opposition from them. He tells them clearly that following Him will not always be easy. Yet, in the midst of that warning, one phrase returns again and again from the Heart of Christ: “Do not be afraid.” This is not only a word of comfort, it is also a call to Christian integrity. Jesus is calling His disciples to live with courage, faithfulness, and an undivided heart.

The first thing Jesus says is: “Fear no one.” Fear is one of the deepest struggles of the human heart. We fear rejection, suffering, losing our security, our reputation, or the approval of others. Sometimes we know what is right, but we remain silent out of fear. Sometimes we know what Christ is asking of us, but we delay obedience because we are afraid of sacrifice, misunderstanding, or change.

Further to this, Jesus did not say: “You will never suffer.” He did not say: “No one will oppose you.” Instead, He encourages with the words: “Do not be afraid.” Why? Because disciples of Christ do not walk alone. A disciple of Christ lives under the loving gaze of God the Father. Earthly powers may touch the body, but they cannot conquer the soul that belongs to God. That is why Jesus says: “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.” Our Lord is teaching us to distinguish between two kinds of fear: the fear of the world that enslaves us and makes us compromise the truth, and the fear of the Lord which is a holy reverence, trust, and surrender before God.

So today, the Gospel asks each of us: What fear is preventing me from being faithful to Christ? What fear keeps me from speaking the truth, choosing holiness, forgiving someone, making a good confession, or changing a habit that is harming my soul?



Then Jesus says something very striking: “What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.” The Apostles first received the word of Christ in intimacy, in silence, in closeness to Him; but that word is not meant to remain hidden. What is received in prayer must become visible in life. This is the heart of *Christian Integrity*.

Integrity means there is no contradiction between the Christ I worship and the life I live. It means there should not be one life for the church and another for the world; one face for prayer and another for daily life. The Gospel we hear at the altar must continue in our home, our workplace, our relationships, our speech, and our choices.

Every day we are given opportunities either to acknowledge Christ or to hide Him. When we speak the truth instead of lying; when we refuse to indulge in gossip; when we choose honesty over profit; when we forgive instead of taking revenge; when we resist temptation in secret; and when we are not ashamed to show that we belong to Christ: this is how the Gospel is proclaimed—not only by words, but by a life that quietly says: “Jesus Christ is Lord, and I belong to Him.”

At the center of today’s Gospel, Jesus gives us one of the tenderest images of the Father’s love: “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father... Even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

What a beautiful revelation of divine providence! Our God is not distant. He is a Father who sees even the sparrow that falls. He knows the burdens we carry; the hidden tears we never explain to anyone; the struggles in our family; the disappointments we carry in silence; the temptations we fight; and the anxieties behind our smile. To that weary heart, Jesus reassures: “Do not be afraid”; not because suffering is unreal, but because we are not forgotten by the Father.

Then comes the most serious part of the Gospel: “Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven.” Faith is not meant to remain

a private feeling. To belong to Christ means to stand with Him, to be identified with Him, and to let our life show that we are His. We deny Him not only through words but also through our silence, our compromises, dishonesty, hatred, and leading a double life. Every day we are faced with the choice to place Christ first in our conscience, first in our decisions, first in our values, and first in our loyalties. That is the martyrdom of daily fidelity. Christian integrity means that the Christ I confess with my lips is the Christ I follow with my heart and my life.

So today, the Lord invites us to examine our hearts. Is there an area of my life where I am hiding my faith? Is there a fear that is weakening my discipleship? Is there a compromise I need to surrender? Is Christ truly visible in the way I live?

Let us ask the Lord for the grace not to be divided or to be ruled by fear, but to live with courage, trust, and integrity.

Perhaps this should be our prayer today: Lord Jesus, deliver me from every fear that weakens my discipleship. Give me the grace to live with Christian integrity. Let my prayer and my life become one. Let my faith and my daily choices become one. When I am tempted to hide, give me courage. When I am tempted to compromise, give me strength. When I am afraid, remind me that I am precious in the Father's eyes. And may my whole life acknowledge You before the world. Amen.