

Commentary on the Gospel for Thu, Jun 28th 2018

What If I Have Trouble Getting Better?

Over the past several weeks, I have had the pleasure of reading *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and be Glad), an apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis. It is a wonderful piece on the call to holiness in today's world. I highly recommend it for the inspiration it provides to live a fuller, happier life with God and each other. So, if you are looking for a self-help book on happiness, this is it!

Towards the end of the exhortation in chapter five, Pope Francis calls our attention to the "Signs of Holiness in Today's World." He talks about "boldness and passion" as an important component of holiness. Specifically, he uses the word "parrhesía" to describe this. Parrhesía is a way to describe boldness in the way we speak and describe thoughts to others. Pope Francis explains the holiness of parrhesía as we spread God's word to others, "To allow us to do this, Jesus himself comes and tells us once more, serenely yet firmly: 'Do not be afraid' (Mk 6:50). 'I am with you always, to the end of the world' (Mt 28:20)." The Holy Spirit provides the "seal" for which to proclaim Jesus Christ with "boldness, enthusiasm, the freedom to speak out, and with apostolic fervor." In other words, with parrhesía.

As I read the today's Gospel, I could not help but think about parrhesía. Pope Francis spent a great deal of time reaffirming that God is always with us and that we should not be afraid to spread the good news. Considering today's reading, he so aptly uses the analogy, "How often we are tempted to stay close to shore! Yet the Lord calls us to put out into the deep and let down our nets." This must have been how the apostles felt as they were out at sea in the violent storm. I imagine myself with a few friends in a small boat with no shore in sight. Suddenly the wind begins to blow and the waves crash over the side of the boat. I'm sure I would have been very afraid as well. Yet, as the story continues, Jesus is there. Even though he is not awake, he is present. Just as he is always present for us today. Pope Francis reminds us that we do not need to be afraid to go out into uncharted waters because God will always be there with us. Even when the seas get rough, he is there to calm the water.

So, we are implored by the Gospel of Mathew and by Pope Francis to be bold and to speak freely about God. This is parrhesía. We need not be afraid because, as Pope Francis says, "the seal of the Holy Spirit testifies to the authenticity of our preaching."

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