

14<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Year “C”  
July 6-7, 2019

*In what or whom do we boast?*

Readings: Isaiah 66:10-14; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

May I never boast of anything save the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nobody likes a braggard because to act in such a manner goes against our very sense of ourselves. If we are honest, we know that there will always be somebody more successful than us, be it terms of finances, success in school or any host of other measurements by which a person is valued in modern society. Speaking of that, perhaps I should add Facebook likes!

In his epistle to the Galatians, Saint Paul teaches that our only boast is in the Cross of Christ. Though we ought to be proud of our faith, we do not treat our faith as a trophy, lest we become a source of scandal to others on account of our pride. Jesus acknowledges that some will not respond positively to our invitation to faith. He sent the disciples out two by two, warning that sometimes the peace that was offered would not be received; it would come back to them. Some will simply not understand our approach to the faith. They may be intrigued or a bit puzzled.

Others, truth be told, will be much more hostile. Are you prepared for this? Many of our faithful laity are experiencing this; far from boasting, instead they shrink from acknowledging their faith out of fear of misunderstanding or even ridicule. If you have experienced this, ask yourself if you have alternatives to your initial response of fear?

While acknowledging our own failings, we ought to be grateful that the Catholic faith has consistently proclaimed truths, both in season and out. Innocent human life is championed both in the womb and at the end stages of life. The sanctity of Christian marriage is upheld, even amidst growing pressures, seemingly on all fronts, to change with the times.

The Church defends its teaching about the sanctity of life even in the case of individuals sentenced to death for horrific crimes, firmly convinced that incarceration is a more humane alternative than the death penalty.

May God strengthen our wills to hold firm against the pressures to water down moral doctrine to fit with the mores of the day.

But rather than boast about our teachings, we strive each and every day to live them in integrity. Our witness will only be compelling if we live these truths consistently. Hypocrisy wounds the Body of Christ, especially when done so by leaders in the Church; we cannot witness effectively if we are seen to be leading contrary lives. If others look askance at our convictions, we ought to explain—neither defensively nor impatiently— but honestly, what is important to us as Catholics.

Finally, it is most appropriate today to pray for our nation, founded 243 years ago this past Thursday. The Lord has preserved our union during some dark days, and the challenges ahead are indeed immense.

Just yesterday (Saturday), a miracle was attributed to the Venerable Fulton Sheen, clearing the way for his Beatification. In 1938, he gave a stirring talk on Catholic patriotism. It was against the backdrop of troubles in Europe. Sheen spoke of dictatorships, including Communistic ones that “regard man only as a stomach to be fed by the State, or as a tool to amass wealth for the State.” He added some great food for thought: I’d like to close with this today:

A democracy needs religion, for it assumes that man has not only a stomach but also a soul which is the seat of his rights; and since that soul must be fed as well as the body, he must have religion. Democracy has to rely not on force, but on freedom and liberty. But freedom and liberty are inseparable from responsibility, and responsibility is inseparable from conscience, and conscience is inseparable from religion.<sup>1</sup>

May God bless and preserve our nation, and may we never boast, except in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Rev. Fulton Sheen delivered these words on *The Catholic Hour* radio program, Feb. 20, 1938.