

Chaplain's Bulletin June 25, 2023



Dear Folks,

Matthew chapter 10 deals with the challenge of being Christian in a world hostile to Christianity.

I have read that North Korea, Somalia, Yemen, Eritrea, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan, and India are the most dangerous places just to be Christian. We need to pray for them.

In Europe and North America, it is not so dangerous just to be known as a Christian, but sometimes people get attacked for standing by Christian beliefs that are not popular. Those who hold to Christianity in general and Catholicism; in particular beliefs about the sanctity of life, sexuality, and family may get attacked verbally, have their property vandalized, and their careers be destroyed. Some people who are hypersensitive about how others talk about things they hold dear will degrade and ridicule things precious to Christians and brush off any concerns. This leads to the question of where it will go from here.

Jesus said, “Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd (wise, prudent, clever, cunning, crafty) as serpents and simple (innocent) as doves (Matthew 10:16).” I hold on to that verse tightly. We don’t know what the future will bring, but there are some things we can do to prepare.

1. Know our story. One of the reasons so many are against the faith is that when they were told about it, it was told very poorly. There is a YouTube video “Bishop Barron on ‘Dumbed Down’ Catholicism” in which he speaks about Catholics being taught on a level far below the level of other subjects. There are some prominent Catholics who fiercely and aggressively oppose some aspects of Catholic teaching and speak boldly about how devout they are.
2. Deepen the roots in our relationship with Jesus. We are not going to win this by our own power.
3. Practice choosing the Kingdom over the world. Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are all ways to choose the Kingdom over the world, and we can look at the practical decisions we make in life.

Not every Christian is called to be martyred for the faith, but every Christian is called to be ready to be martyred for the faith, and it starts with small decisions. “The person who is trustworthy in very small matters is also trustworthy in great ones; and the person who is dishonest in very small matters is also dishonest in great ones. What in our day-to-day decisions says that we are ready (or getting ready) to

choose the kingdom over the world?

Bishop Barron also did a YouTube video “Why Modern Men Look Elsewhere for Spiritual Wisdom” and he basically concluded that we have made Christianity too easy and convenient. The Gospel is meant to push us to greatness, and that can’t be done if you shave off the difficult parts in the name of making it friendlier. If we read the Gospels and take them seriously, there can be no doubt that Jesus calls us to be willing to give our lives in one way or another, to be willing to suffer, to follow whatever the cost. We don’t know what will be asked of us tomorrow. How will we answer?

Blessings,

Fr. Jim