

Yesterday is gone.  
Tomorrow has not yet come.  
We have only today.

*Let us Begin*  
— Mother Teresa



## Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

The Readings for the **19th Week in Ordinary Time** offer some thoughts on this Sunday's theme: Be Prepared. Be prepared not only for Joyful moments but even for Martyrdom.

Pope Francis has often reflected on martyrdom. He said this regarding the Central American martyr, Archbishop Oscar Romero: "Each Christian ought to be ready to give his life for the faith. A martyr is not born. It's a grace that the Lord allows, and that in a way concerns every baptized person." Quoting a phrase of Blessed Oscar Romero, the Pope said that "We must be willing to die for our faith, even if the Lord does not give us this honor."

"To give one's life doesn't only consist of being killed," he said, but rather "to give one's life, to have the spirit of a martyrdom, is to surrender it in duty, in silence, in prayer, in the fulfillment of duty; in this silence of everyday life; to give one's life little by little."

Jesus tells us, "Be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." In saying this Jesus is giving us advanced warning. Before considering the warning, we should note that the saying is very hopeful. No matter what we have done, no what condition we are in right now, we can still make a new beginning. We can at least get started, ask God's help to put things in order. Jesus tells us that the important thing is what we are doing the moment he returns.

In the Hail Mary, we ask Our Blessed Mother to pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Those are the two moments that matter. Yesterday is gone; tomorrow may never come. Today is what matters. How small our arguments and our battles will be when Jesus comes for us! So, ask God's help to put aside those quarrels.

Some people say that if we focus on the afterlife – heaven, purgatory or hell - we neglect this world. But, perhaps surprisingly, it's just the opposite. People who focus on eternity are often the ones who do the most in this world. Think about St. Mother Teresa. Who has done more than her to help the outcast?

St. Mother Teresa illustrates that those who focus on receiving Jesus will do good for people here on earth. The paradox applies not only to individuals, but to institutions. The institutions that we most value - for example, hospitals and universities - they were founded (back in the Middle Ages) by people with deep Christian faith.

Like Jesus, Pope Francis tells to be prepared, be prepared for martyrdom, be ready to surrender all to Jesus. "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival."

PS, As I pray for you every day, please remember me in your prayers while I am gone for nine (9) weeks at Military bootcamp!!

Have a Blessed 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time!

Rev. Rafal Ligenza  
Pastor — St. Joseph Parish