

Into the Trenches

My brothers and sisters in Christ,

I would like to write today about what I call *Catholic trench warfare*. Trench warfare is the act of dying to self on a daily basis. More to the point, Catholic trench warfare involves bringing our Faith to every part of our lives. It is often the case that the mundane acts of our Faith often fall to the wayside as being “not of great importance.” Not *unimportant*, but not of *great* importance. For instance, I think many of us would be willing to die for the Faith (because it is important as a whole), but we are often unwilling not to use God’s name in vain. We are often scared or ashamed to tell our friends that we believe in “One God, the Father almighty...in one Lord Jesus Christ” (from the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). Trench warfare for the Catholic is the daily act of dying to our pride to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. It is living the Ten Commandments especially when it is not easy. In short, it is living a Catholic identity especially in difficult moments. This is a scary thing and a very difficult task.

When I say trench warfare, it is not because of the burden of the laws or rules of the Church. The trenches, rather, refer to the limits of our vision, and our inability (by virtue of our humanity) to see the end result towards which we are working by following these rules and laws of the Church. This is what makes this trench warfare; it is what makes being a Catholic difficult. For instance, it can be difficult to see how things such as not gossiping, going to Mass regularly, and not using the Lord’s name in vain are conducive towards bringing about the Kingdom of God here on earth. These difficult rules of the Catholic Church are not for their own sake, instead they help us follow Christ. As Catholics, we see that the Church is what helps us have relationship with Christ so that we find ultimate happiness in heaven.

Catholic trench warfare is living out the Gospel message hourly, internally and externally. Internally, by clinging to the truths of our Faith: the hope of the Resurrection, remembering that the Father loves us unconditionally, and that He gave us the Church and the Sacraments to help and guide us on our way. Externally, by practicing the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, and not being afraid or ashamed of living the truth of the Gospel, despite what discomfort it might bring.

The reason I am saying all of this is because I believe (and by virtue of the fact that you’re reading this I can assume you do as well) that Jesus Christ has the answers, which He gives us through His Church: the answers to suffering and the many problems in the world. Moreover, He shows the way to eternal life and happiness. What Jesus is telling us to do in Sunday’s Gospel is to spread this good news: the news that there is hope, that He has come, and has these answers. The message of the Gospel is the very message of life, and people need to hear it. We who are blessed with this knowledge ought to show it to others. Let us march joyfully into the trenches Monday morning as we go about our daily duties, dying to ourselves so that others may see the way to eternal life that Christ has to offer through His Church.

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