

June 25, 2017, 12th Sun. in Ord. Time, 'How to Give Witness to God,' Mt. 10:20-33, by r.j.tusky

"Everyone who acknowledges me before others..."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Once upon a time, someone once said... that every Christian occupies some kind of a pulpit and preaches some kind of a sermon every day. This is especially true when it comes to parents in a home. In April 1987, the Catholic Digest carried an interview of a couple who had just celebrated their 25th year of marriage.

In the course of the interview, the couple revealed that they prayed together every night since their wedding night. At first, they simply recited prayers like the Our Father and the Hail Mary. As time went on, they read scripture together and shared reflections on what they had read.

*Another way they prayed together was spontaneously... from the heart. Sometimes this involved asking God for help for a problem they were both having. Each spouse admitted that praying this way was not easy at first. **BUT**, they also admitted that this kind of honest prayer from the heart was a tremendous source of grace for them.*

Commenting on this, the husband said:

"I'd sometimes not pray about something because I didn't want to say it in front of Rita."

He said he eventually overcame his reluctance when he realized that this was being dishonest, not only with Rita, but also with God.

When he finally got over the reluctance, this form of prayer became a great help in getting them over some tough times, especially in the first seven years of their marriage.

The couple said they got the idea of praying together from Rita's parents.

"In my family, when I was growing up," Rita said, **"we didn't close doors much. I could hear my parents praying at night. It was a very comforting sound. Sometimes, they'd invite us in and we'd all go sit on their bed. They took turns reading from the Bible and from a book called The Upper Room."**

This is the kind of witness, especially in the home, that Jesus is talking about in today's Gospel. It's the kind of witness that, perhaps, we're not used to. Yet, it is the kind of witness Jesus invites us to make. It's the kind of witness that, if we implement it, can change our family relationships and lives in a most remarkable way.

'And what keeps us from this kind of witness?' you ask. Jesus, himself, alludes to the answer 3 times in the Gospel. It is fear! And 3 times Jesus says to his followers: **FEAR NOT!** And that's what he says to us here today: **FEAR NOT!** This is the good news that could change, not only the lives of our loved ones, but also the people whose lives they touch!

I close with this prayer:

God our Father, give us the courage to bear witness to you in every area of life. Help us realize that the most important area of witness is in the home. If we bear witness in this area, our witness in other areas of life will take care of itself.

May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you... the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.