

June 21, 2026 Homily

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/062126.cfm>

We live in a time of situations that generate great fear in humanity: The terrible violence in the world and in our streets, the world financial situation, the unemployed, those whose businesses are collapsing, the number of people who live immoral lives, and the constant destruction of the environment. Our future is completely unpredictable. Also, people have personal challenges: An illness, a divorce, an unexpected beloved's death. When Jesus says in today's Gospel, "Do not be afraid," He is not calling us to minimize our concerns and pains, or to act without responsibility among these challenges. Rather, He is calling us to act with hope, righteousness, patient, and love.

Jesus never told his disciples, "If you follow me, you will have financial success, or you will be the most popular person, or you will never get sick, or you will never die in an accident." When He says, "Do not be afraid," He is talking about something that causes more fear in people today: That is, the proclamation of God's love, a message that's always counter-cultural.

Often, the Gospel is offensive, because it is not always a word of comfort, but a word of challenge. And the one who proclaims God's love is subject to hateful reactions and persecution. So, what is it about God's message that is so challenging, that it drives faithful people to despair?

The Gospel is good news to some. It brings good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the oppressed. Jesus' Gospel is good news too, for those who acknowledge that they are spiritually oppressed, or bound by sin, or blind to the light of Christ. It is Good News for those who repent and seek God's help in being themselves restored and made whole.

But the Gospel is bad news, offensive, for those who don't know their need to be made new in Christ. Some people don't really like a faith that calls them to real conversion and to love themselves, their neighbor, and God. The message of Christ is offensive for some of us, because it calls us to live, not according to the law, but according to love. Jesus invites us to sink our hands into the wounds of the suffering; to sit beside

the careless sinner and share a meal with him. Jesus calls us to see on the face of other sinners like you and me, not their present failure, but their promising future.

Dear brothers and sisters, why are we so afraid of loving one another? Love is what changes us and it changes the world in the ways of God. We should not be afraid of a Gospel that makes us instruments of God's love and infinite mercy. Jesus calls us to embody God's love, which means to break and share our material and spiritual bread with each other; to heal the wounds of the hurting and despairing; to welcome the stranger as a brother and sister in Christ; to restore the dignity of those who are broken by sin and loneliness; to reach out to those excluded by society and by church members; to welcome all into this imperfect and stumbling Church and sit them at the table of healing love and saving fellowship. We can do this and a lot of more if we are open to change, to embrace conversion, to let God's love transform our hearts.

This time, as we face fear and anxiety, it is an opportunity to proclaim that God can be trusted, that love is the answer to many of our problems, and that we all can be healed by love. We may be broken and suffering now: But there is a broken world, thirsting and starving for our love and compassion. When was the last time we told our children, our parents, or a good friend, how much we love them? Why are we so afraid of expressing love to one another, as we find easy ways to express hate? We, Christians have the Bread of Life and the Cup of Blessing, the Word of Truth, and the Spirit of Wisdom, to feel, heal, reconcile, unite and sanctify ourselves, our families, our community and the world.

Many children starve for a word of love. Some parents don't feel loved and appreciated by their children. Some others don't feel loved by their spouse anymore. The lonely and the despairing need to hear that they are loved. A distant relative or friend may have not heard the expression "I love you" in the last months, or years... The immigrants around us and all those rejected in this world, need the experience of God's love in their lives. The love of God is poured out abundantly on us. We can offer God's given graces to those who need them right now. It is challenging and intimidating, but Jesus is clear: Do you want to be a better Christian? Do you want to heal your own wounds and be freed from your past frustrations? "Do not be afraid. Enter into the family of God's love."

The Universal Prayer
Sunday, 21-June-2026
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, Jesus' instruction to the Twelve, "Do not be afraid.", are words of hope for all who face difficulties in life.

1. For the Church, that under the care of Pope Leo, it will face the future with trust, and recognize the dignity of every person across the world.

We pray to the Lord.

2. That we will all value that divine grace which has come to Us through Jesus Christ, an abundant free gift intended for all.

We pray to the Lord.

3. That peace will come at last across the Middle East, so that Palestine, Israel, Lebanon and Iran, along with their neighbors, will rebuild their homes and infrastructure and live in safety.

We pray to the Lord.

4. For the people suffering from Ebola, those living where there is drought, and those where the violence of gangs and terrorists is causing fear.

We pray to the Lord.

5. For Christians across the Middle East where they face persecution and discrimination, that the universal Church will support them so that they can witness to Jesus Christ in the cradle of Christianity.

We pray to the Lord.

6. For an increase in the number of vocations to the Priesthood in the Diocese of Raleigh, and to the Religious Life in the Daughters of St. Mary of Guadalupe.

We pray to the Lord.

7. For those who have died in mysterious circumstances, through domestic violence and in accidents, that they may find eternal rest in God.

We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Lord our God, in your great love, answer us, and with your help that never fails show the world that your love is kind and your compassion never ending.

Through Christ our Lord.