

Homily
Memorial of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, Virgin
July 14, 2023

I hate commercials. I go out of my way to avoid them. I pay extra to watch my favorite shows and movies without commercials. They are only trying to sell me something and I don't need anything else – at least that's what my wife tells me, "No, you don't need that; you have everything you need."

I understand that this is how our economy works, that we do need to interact with those who provide products and services just as I provide a product and service at my job so that we all get what we need to survive. This is how the world goes round and round.

But the world is awfully noisy about what it thinks we need. The world is full of opinions about not only what it thinks I need, but how I should think and act. The world is more than poised to hold me accountable if I do not bow to its beliefs and expectations.

But we are members of a family, the Body of Christ. We are accountable to our most merciful Father. We support and uphold each other as commanded by our Lord and Savior.

Jesus tells us to go and tell the Good News to the world. And in today's gospel, He prepares us and warns us to be ready, to be vigilant, to recognize the wolf in sheep's clothing. And that is no less relevant than in today's world of temptation and hate and violence. The pagans of Jesus' time are no different than the pagans in today's world. We must be prepared; we must be vigilant.

Jesus gives us the command, and He also gives us the tools we need to not only survive but thrive amongst the wolves. He gives us instructions in the Word Proclaimed. He gives us nourishment and strength in the Sacrament received. And He gives us each other as members of the same Family of God to support, encourage and even admonish each other. We must protect ourselves from the wolves of this world by being strong in our faith and meek in our interactions with one another.

Kateri Tekakwitha was strong in her faith. She vowed virginity against the wishes of her community. She stressed personal convictions and ascetic practices (simple living, begging, fasting, humility, compassion, meditation, patience and prayer) even though priests in the community discouraged her due to her poor health. She exhibits for us a loyalty and certainty to her faith in Jesus. It is said that her final words were, "Jesus, Mary, I love you." If only I might have that level of commitment to my faith in life and especially at the end of our life.

We all have the same opportunities to share our faith with the world. We all have the same opportunities to stand up against the paganism of this world. We all have the same opportunities to learn our faith, be strengthened and encouraged by each other and our Lord. And we all have the same opportunities to say at the end of our lives, "Jesus, Mary, I love you."