



Catholic Leadership Speaker Series

November 15, 2022

Keeping the Faith in Everyday Life

Father Hagan, O.S.A., 41st Prior Provincial at the Augustinian Province of St. Thomas of Villanova, joined us to talk about Keeping the Faith in Everyday Life. Following is a summary of that talk.

In today's world, Father Hagan reminds us we have all been challenged, but he adds, we are not in it alone. Our God is with us and suffers with us. It's a challenge to look for God and the presence of God in our everyday life. It is easy to see God in the sunlight of a beautiful day, but often it's difficult to see God with us in the broken or difficultness of our lives.

It's vocation awareness week, and we thank God for all those in religious vocations. But also for those in vocations as parents, friends, business leaders, etc. Our challenge is to listen and hear the call of our vocation in the midst of all the noise. We need to enter the conversation of our life in peace and with God's grace. Remember, we are in this together. People are walking around with heavy hearts, but we have to understand that our calling is to be kind to people. Everyone is fighting a battle that we may know nothing about. Jesus listened, broke bread, spent time, and cared for people. The love that one person shows to the other can produce incredible effects. It can remove fear and break down walls and boundaries. All of us can do those things.

How do you lead in today's world? What is the difference between building on sand and building on a rock? Sand is shifty and doesn't hold up over time. If you want to build something long and lasting, you need to establish a foundation on a sound, firm, dependable rock. Jesus spent his life showing us what those rocks are: Humility – Say you're sorry when you make a mistake. Gratitude – Think about what you have, and don't compare yourself to others.

We need to establish our lives on the foundation of those rocks. Jesus never said things wouldn't be hard, but he shows us on the cross that life isn't about avoiding storms. It's about learning how to dance in the rain. When we remember our faith and that we are not in it alone, joy is restored. We need to radiate our joy. Allow it to enter our hearts and allow it to show in our hearts, faces, and smiles in both the good times and the difficult times.

In Beatitudes, Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, if you remember nothing else, remember this: blessed are the poor, blessed are you when things don't turn





out. Blessed are you when you depend on one another and on me for strength, light, and resiliency. Grace is the power to do those things we cannot do ourselves. We need Grace, and it is all around us. We just need to access Grace.

As we come into the season of Advent, we learn a new thing that Advent is about waiting. Jesus shows us how to wait. We can work constructively while we wait and not become overwhelmed. We can't do everything, but we can do something and, by so doing, allow the opportunity for God's Grace to enter in. Focus on the process, and the results will take care of themselves. Do what we can each day to stay close to the source of our Grace. Trust in the process, and don't define yourselves by what the world tempts you to define yourself by; trust in the process that's bigger than that.

Advent is an opportunity to look at our lives and evaluate to what and to whom we have said "Yes." What in my life do I need to say "No" to? In order for us to be able to say yes to those things God is inviting us to, we have to be able to say no to other things. We have to be able to sacrifice and pare down our life in order to take full advantage of God's offerings.

Joy is what we hope for on Christmas and what we hope to radiate in our daily lives. FOMO (Fear of missing out) can be replaced by JOMO (Joy of missing out) to allow God to speak to us in the middle of our silence. An appreciation for solitude allows God to speak in your head or your heart. Having a conversation with God changes us. It changes the way we see things and one another.

I encourage all of you to take one or two steps closer to the Lord. Leave the past in the past and live in the present. Spend Advent taking time to step closer to the Lord and share the light and love with the people in your life. Trust in what God is calling us to do and not the end results of what we are doing. Trust the Light in the face of darkness.

