



Therefore, my beloved, be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

February 3, 2026

Hello Everyone —

At the Sunday Angelus on January 25, Pope Leo reflected on that particular Sunday's Gospel — the beginning of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Matthew 4:12-22) — and he said in part:

First of all, the Gospel tells us that Jesus began his preaching "when he heard that John had been arrested." (v. 12) He began, therefore, at what might appear to be an inopportune moment. John the Baptist had just been imprisoned, and the leaders of the people were seemingly reluctant to embrace the newness of the Messiah. Apparently, it was a time that called for caution. Yet, it was precisely in this dark situation that Jesus began to bring the light of the Good News: "The kingdom of heaven has come near." (v. 17)

In our lives, both individually and as a Church, interior struggles or circumstances we deem unfavorable can lead us to believe that it is not the right time to proclaim the Gospel, to make a decision, to make a choice, or to change a situation. In this way, however, we risk becoming paralyzed by indecision or imprisoned by excessive prudence, whereas the Gospel calls us to dare to trust. God is at work at all times; every moment is "God's time," even when we do not feel ready or when the situation seems unfavorable.

Pope Francis, of happy memory, left as part of his legacy the Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate* (Rejoice and Be Glad, 2018) in which he put his own spin on this topic by writing:

The Christian life is a constant battle. We need strength and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel. This battle is sweet, for it allows us to rejoice each time the Lord triumphs in our lives. (no. 158)

Archbishop Paul Coakley, President of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, recently put a razor's edge on what it looks like to live the Gospel at the current time — or not. In his January 28 statement, the archbishop wrote:

Many people today feel powerless in the face of violence, injustice, and social unrest. To those who feel this way, I wish to say clearly: your faithfulness matters. Your prayers matter. Your acts of love and works of justice matter.

I am deeply grateful for the countless ways Catholics and all people of good will continue to serve one another and work for peace and justice. Whether feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, caring for the sick, accompanying the lonely, visiting the imprisoned, or striving daily to love their neighbors, no work of mercy or act of justice is ever wasted in the eyes of God. While proper laws must be respected, works of mercy, peacefully assembling, and caring for those in your community are signs of hope, and they build peace more surely than anger or despair ever could. Christ reminds us that even “a single cup of cold water” given in his name will not go unrewarded (cf. Mt 10:42).

The recent killing of two people by immigration enforcement officers in Minneapolis and that of a detained man in Texas, are just a few of the tragic examples of the violence that represent failures in our society to respect the dignity of every human life. We mourn this loss of life and deplore the indifference and injustice it represents. The current climate of fear and polarization, which thrives when human dignity is disregarded, does not meet the standard set by Christ in the Gospel.

As I do for you, please pray for me,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

