

JULY 11 2025 FATHER ERNESTO DE CICCIO

Jesus pretty much guarantees his disciples that they will face persecution. It was certainly true 2,000 years ago. And, as people of faith, we have to face it in our own day and time.

Oh, they might not have us flogged or necessarily put to death, but just think of how many times people will put us down because of our faith. They will laugh at us.

So what do we do? Make sure we don't have a big cross hanging from our neck? Make sure we hide our rosary?

People like to say there are certain subjects we should avoid when we have dinner — don't talk politics, and certainly don't talk religion. And why?

What are we afraid of? Are we afraid of people's attacks? Are we afraid that we might not be able to defend ourselves?

There should be no shame in professing our faith. I love it when I do baptisms, and we do the renunciation of faith and profession of faith. After all the questions, we say, "This is our faith! This is the faith of the Church and we are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

We should be proud to profess our faith. We shouldn't be ashamed of it. We should wear it on our sleeves, even if people give us funny looks, put us down, insult us, or laugh at us.

Jesus promised persecution to those who believe in him. And persecution does not mean that we're going to be fed to the lions. Persecution means we'll be rejected by some, challenged, certainly, and even put down.

But we don't run and hide. We don't avoid the subject. Not that we go out of our way to get into arguments with people. But what are we hiding?

It's the most important thing in our life. When you go to a restaurant, do you say grace before meals in front of everybody there? You should see me, doing the biggest sign of the cross in the world! Nothing to hide.

Because, not just priests, but every one of us should be proud of the faith that we profess. And yes, we don't have to have an advanced degree in theology to defend what we believe.

You gotta love what Jesus teaches his disciples in the Gospel that we just read: "Do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you at that time."

The Spirit of the Father will speak through us, giving us the right words to say, the right answers to give.

This is a good lesson for us to learn about life in general. Because it's not our personal intelligence, or our good looks, or our physical strength, or talents, that get us through life. But it's our God, who is with us, working through us at all times.

So then, we continue to profess our faith, trusting that the Lord will work through us. That the Lord will give us the right words to say, not in our defence, but in his defence.

And even if we have to face some persecution, like 2,000 years of Christians who've gone before us, we face it not with fear, but even with joy. Because we have shared, to some degree, in the Passion of Christ himself.

Let's never be ashamed of our faith. Let's thank God that we've been blessed with it.