



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Good Friday is Near. Are We Ready to Follow Jesus and Take Up His Cross?

Ten years ago Prof. Robert George of Princeton University, McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, spoke about changes in our culture's attitude and treatment regarding those who faithfully follow the teachings of the Bible. He pointed out that a Catholic who actually lives the teachings of his faith is in for a very rough time.

That time has been with us for ten full years now and grows even more difficult. In 2024 the anti-religion, Bible-bashing forces in our society, abetted by government regulations, spurious court challenges and media-driven extremism are imposing an even more Herculean challenge to Americans who believe and faithfully aspire to live the words of the Bible and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

From almost every direction come pressures to enable the destruction of pre-born life, to validate an array of gender identities, to bless marriages outside of the union of one man and one woman, to submit our children to principles and behaviors unacceptable to our consciences and accept denial of our rights to speak and act as full participants within the public square of ideas and policies.

When Prof. George urged us ten years ago that as Catholics we must live the truth of the Gospel as proclaimed by the Church, he acknowledged there would be a price to pay. From being cancelled to being ostracized and marginalized we see that cost every day.

Prof. George said, "You see, for us, as for our faithful Evangelical friends, it is now Good Friday. The memory of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem has faded." "The love affair with Jesus, his gospel and his church is over. Elite sectors of the cultures of Europe and North America no longer welcome his message." "Away with him," they shout. "Give us Barrabas!"

More than ever, the Catholic laity must speak and act publicly in defense of religious freedom. By being dynamic in following our faith, our actions will exemplify our words. Cardinal Dolan has reminded us that a charism of the laity is to protect religious freedom in the public square. Archbishop Chaput advised, "If lay people don't love their Catholic faith enough to struggle for it in the public square, nothing the bishops do will finally matter."

Read Prof. George's full remarks here: <https://tinyurl.com/87espsd2>