

Homily For First Catholic Slovak Union 53rd Quadrennial Convention Twelfth Sunday In Ordinary Time - June 21, 2026

By FCSU Protector, The Most Reverend Larry J. Kulick, J.C.L., Bishop of Greensburg



My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, in today's Gospel, Jesus speaks tenderly, but firmly, to his disciples – *"Do not be afraid."*

Three times he says:

- *Fear no one.*
- *Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.*
- *So do not be afraid.*

He says it again and again because our Lord knows the human heart. He knows that fear can silence us. Fear can convince us that faith is something private, something to be kept quiet, something to be spoken only in whispers.

But Jesus does not call his disciples to whisper the Gospel. He says, *"What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops."*

That is not a timid or hidden faith. Speaking in the light...proclaiming on the housetops...that is the faith of the Apostles! That is the faith of the martyrs! That is the faith of our ancestors.

In a particular way today, we give thanks for the faith of the Slovak Catholic people – a faith carried across oceans, preserved through hardship, handed on in families, nourished in parishes, expressed in language, song, food, devotion, sacrifice, and love. The Catholic Slovak heritage is not merely a whisper of where people came from. It is a living testimony of who we are in Christ.

Our ancestors did not bring only suitcases to this country. They brought rosaries worn smooth by prayer. They brought crucifixes and Bibles. They brought devotion to the Blessed Mother, love for the Eucharist, reverence for the priesthood, loyalty to the Church, and a deep understanding that family, faith, work, and community belong together. They built churches before they built comforts. They formed societies not only to preserve culture, but to protect dignity, strengthen families, bury the dead, care for widows and orphans, and keep the Catholic faith at the center of life.

That is what it means to *"speak in the light."*

To speak in the light is not only to give speeches or make declarations. It is to love so clearly, so faithfully, so generously, that others can see Christ in us. And to *"proclaim on the housetops"* is to refuse to let the faith become hidden, embarrassed, diluted, or forgotten. It is to say to our children and grandchildren: this heritage matters because Christ matters! These traditions matter because they are how we have encountered Christ! This Catholic faith matters because it is the pearl of great price.

We live in a time when many people are tempted to be quiet about faith. Some are afraid of being misunderstood or offending someone. Some are afraid of seeming old-fashioned. Some are afraid that devotion, heritage, and tradition no longer have a place in modern life. But Jesus says to us today: *"Do not be afraid."*

Do not be afraid to be authentically Catholic.

Do not be afraid to love the Church.

Do not be afraid to honor our Slovak heritage.

Do not be afraid to pray in the language of our ancestors, to teach the prayers to the next generation, to gather around the table with gratitude, to keep holy the Lord's day, to defend the dignity of the poor and vulnerable, to carry forward the works of charity that gave birth to this union.

Do not be afraid to proclaim from the housetops that faith and heritage are not museum pieces. They are treasures entrusted to us for mission.

This convention, then, is not only a gathering to remember the past. It is a call to receive the past as a gift and to carry it forward with courage.

The question before us is not only, "What did our ancestors do?" The question is, "What will we do with what they handed on to us?"

Jesus tells us why we can be brave: because we are known and loved by the Father. *"Even all the hairs of your head are counted."* Not one sparrow falls without the Father's knowledge, and we are worth more than many sparrows. That is the foundation of Christian courage. We do not proclaim the Gospel because we

are strong on our own. We proclaim it because we are held by the Father.

Dear friends, the First Catholic Slovak Union has a noble history, but its mission is not finished. The same Lord who strengthened our ancestors strengthens us now. The same Lord who whispered the Gospel into their hearts asks us to speak it in the light.

So let us not be afraid.

Let us be grateful for our Catholic Slovak heritage.

Let us be bold in handing it on.

Let us honor those who came before us not only by remembering them, but by living the faith they cherished.

And let us proclaim, in our homes, our parishes, our communities, and our world, that Jesus Christ is Lord.

What has been whispered, let us speak in the light.

What has been handed on, let us proclaim on the housetops.

And may the Lord, who has been faithful in every generation, make us faithful witnesses in our own.

