

(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC

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(PRACTICING) CATHOLIC - RECOGNIZE GOD IN YOUR ORDINARY MOMENTS

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Shake Off the Dust

Our kitchen floor is at least 35 years old, and it's the ugliest color to come out of the '80s. But it's a good, durable floor, and my husband, bless his heart, guards it like it was a finely finished hardwood imported from Brazil.

Every time the kids track mud and sand across its vinyl surface, he immediately gets down on his hands and knees and lovingly wipes the mess away. I'm too impatient to do this myself — *we have kids, so we're going to have a dirty floor*, is my attitude. But this is the hill upon which my husband dies. On hands and knees, scraping dirt off an almost 40-year-old floor, he is the silent, long-suffering sentry, and if it kills him, he will keep these floors pristine. He is Gandalf, and the dirt is the Balrog. *You shall not pass.*

"Shake the dust off your feet." This is what Christ tells his disciples to do when they — and his word — are rejected. Shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them. Why does he say that? It's not an act of dismissal. It's not a thumbed nose or a stuck-out tongue. No, it's an act of caution: *Don't bring it with you. Leave it there.*

When we walk through the world, we pick up a lot of dirt. Misguided notions, disordered priorities, habits, and desires that we never noticed until we realized they left a trail. We come into a situation intending to do what is right, but somehow it all goes sideways, and we walk away from it with detritus clinging to us in places we don't notice. *They wouldn't listen. They'll see, we think. Oh, they'll see. They'll see how right I was.* Pride and vengeance hitch a ride on the soles of our feet, and we track them all through the world.

What to do about this? You can be like me with my ugly old floor. You can shrug your shoulders and say, "It happens, I guess. I'm only human. I meant well."

But here's what would be better: be like my husband. Get down on your knees and get rid of the dirt. Stop the trail in its tracks.

"So they went off and preached repentance." — Mark 6:12