

13th Sunday Ordinary Time Year “C”
June 25-26, 2022

The cost of discipleship.

Readings: 1 Kings 19:16, 19-21; Galatians 5:1,13-18; Luke 9:51-62

While we all feel the pinch from the rising cost of gasoline at the pump, today’s readings remind us that the cost of discipleship is even higher! There is no other Gospel counterpart to today’s passage that shows Jesus “resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem.” The phrase “resolutely determined” literally means “he set his face,” demonstrating his total commitment to accomplishing the will of the Father. Jesus knew the cost.

It must have been quite a shock when the disciples were rebuked for trying to protect Jesus in what was believed to be enemy territory. After all, the Samaritans were not considered fully Jewish. They did not accept all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures. They had their own liturgy, built their own temple at Mount Gerizim and denied the religious importance of Jerusalem. Still, Jesus chose to go straight through their village.

One man wished first to attend to a family burial, while another wanted to say farewell. In each case, a condition was put on discipleship. While they appear to offer reasonable excuses, Jesus is having none of it. All were rejected as unworthy of total discipleship. What are our excuses? What are the limitations we put on Christ’s call to discipleship? “Someday when I find the time, I am going to read the bible in its entirety...” Or “When I retire, I will volunteer more at church.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a theologian and Lutheran minister who died in a Berlin prison during World War II, wrote about the cost of discipleship: Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ. It remains an abstract idea, a myth which has a place for the Fatherhood of God, but omits Christ as the living Son. ...There is trust in God, but no following of Christ.¹

Our Lord’s may seem to be cruel, but in fact merely stress the demanding nature of discipleship. That said, discipleship is not opposed to joy and

¹ “The Cost of Discipleship, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1937. Page 169 of “Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1991

happiness. When we serve the Lord with all our hearts, we become more receptive to His love, and thereby become more disposed to His grace.

Sacrifice is difficult, but not burdensome, and therein lies the difference. Our burdens become those aspects of our lives that refuse this call to greater communion. Do not fear discipleship—it will open a horizon that you never imagined. The true barriers are simply based in our fear of letting go of our comforts, or at least our perceived need of them.

Our local shepherd, Archbishop Hebda, released a beautiful statement following Friday’s Supreme Court decision in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* case. In it, he singled out the countless faithful laity who have labored tirelessly for life. The archbishop noted:

For 50 years, the pro-life movement has stood in the breach, speaking up for the babies who have no voice; for the despairing parents, the moms and dads who thought they had no choice. Our dedicated faithful have prayed daily, been assaulted verbally and physically, been threatened and yet have stood fast for life.

That is discipleship. That is courage; that is perseverance. The cost of discipleship is high, but the Lord will provide the necessary grace to persevere. St. Augustine wrote: “Every action done so as to cling to God in communion of holiness and thus achieve blessedness, is a true sacrifice.”² Outward sacrifice is the expression of a willing interior spiritual sacrifice. Let us not fear making that commitment. May we never tire of advocating for the sanctity of all human life and supporting women to make the choice for life. Lord, we will follow you wherever you go.

² CCC Para # 2099: cf. Saint Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, 10, 6 Proinde verum sacrificium est omne opus, quo agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo veraciter beati esse possimus.