

Living the Word

MEDITATING ON THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

Year C - 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

A resource for personal, family and community prayer.

"Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."



Gospel: Luke 14:25-33

You are invited to read the Gospel passage attentively, respectfully and reverently as a gift of God.

²⁵Great crowds accompanied him on his way and he turned and spoke to them. ²⁶"If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes, his own life too, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸And indeed which of you here, intending to build a tower, would not first sit down and work out the cost to see if he had enough to complete it? ²⁹Otherwise, if he laid the foundation and then found himself unable to finish the work, the onlookers would all start making fun of him and saying, ³⁰'Here is a man who started to build and was unable to finish.'

³¹Or again, what King marching to war against another King would not first sit down and consider whether with ten thousand men he could stand up to the other who advanced against him with twenty thousand? ³²If not, then while the other King was still a long way off, he would send envoys to sue for peace.

³³ So, in the same way, none of you can be my disciple unless he gives up all his possessions."

Background to Gospel passage

Where does it happen? Jesus is making his way through towns and villages on his way to Jerusalem (where Jesus will embrace his own Cross).

When does it happen? It takes place at a moment when Jesus appears to be well liked, admired and popular.

Who is there? There is a 'great crowd' following Jesus along the road.

What happens? Just in case "the crowds" are under any illusion Jesus is determined to bring home the cost of true discipleship in terms of conflict and possible rejection. When he speaks of "hating father, mother etc" this is a biblical way of expressing that there will be times when fidelity to the way of Jesus - justice, mercy, welcome and inclusion - will have to take precedence over family loyalties.

The two parables are basically saying the same thing: before embarking on the path of discipleship people need to weigh up the demands and implications and see whether they are ready and prepared for the commitment involved.

Suggested Guidelines to help you recognise this passage in your life experience.

“Jesus turned round and spoke to them..”

Can you remember a great leader like Jesus whom you admired who didn't ask anything of others that they were not prepared to do themselves?

“Anyone who does not carry his cross and come after me..”

When have you been, or seen someone, in a leadership role who was determined to nip in the bud any attempt to glamorize or idealize a particular calling - career, vocation, way of life, or life-style choice - by keeping people firmly grounded in the real cost of such a commitment?

“If any man comes to me without hating father, mother..”

When have you experienced making an important decision that didn't meet with the

approval of family and friends? You did what you knew you had to do to be true to yourself, to your own personal growth, to your own values and freedom.

“Which of you intending to build a tower would not first sit down..”

When have you had, or seen someone with, a desire to embark on something new in family life, work-life, church involvement or a community project, but before setting out you wisely checked out others already on this road so as to ensure you were as prepared as you could be for the commitment required to see it through?

Or remember the times you “jumped into” some new venture without any real thought or preparation and you were left with sad regrets.

What does this Gospel remind me of? Where was it? When was it? Who was there? What happened?

Now I can see that God's loving presence and action were in that life experience.

Prayer Response - you are invited to respond in prayer in your own words.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for the times when I have experienced this Gospel in my life...

Heavenly Father, I am sorry for the times I have fallen short of living this Gospel...

Heavenly Father, please help me to live this Gospel...



You are invited to deepen this prayer experience by resting your heart silently in God's presence and love. The quiet repetition of a word or phrase from the passage may help you on this journey to stillness and silence, for example, "His Way".

An Invitation to Reflect

What new insight has the Gospel opened my eyes to see?

Action

This week I will try to live the Gospel by...

Thought for the week

Faithfulness to the way of love inevitably brings suffering and sacrifice.
Rest in this truth, hold it in prayer and trust that it will bear fruit in your life.

Children



Jesus told the people that following Him is not always easy. He said we need to put Him first in our lives and be ready to make good choices, even when it's hard.

Can you think of a person—a parent, a teacher, or a friend—who helps you make good choices?

Draw or write about this 'Jesus person' and how they have helped you make good choices.



Father, I thank You for the gift of this story which has helped me see how the presence of Your son in my life can help me make good choices.

Action: this week I will try to show love by...

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