

My dear people of God, this Sunday Jesus confronts us with the cost of discipleship. To help us think about this, Jesus employs some provocative language. 'None of you can be my disciple unless you give up all those possessions; you say you can't live without.' **Another essential skill is putting Jesus first.** That's what he's getting at by saying, 'you can't be my disciple without hating your mother, father, brother and sister (Mt. 10:37). It is certainly language to wake us up; isn't it, or to ask, what is it going to mean to be a genuine follower of Jesus. Being a genuine follower of Jesus Christ entails **total dedication and commitment.** It also means **detachment from all worldly attractions.** We cannot allow other commitments to take priority.

If we desire to spend eternity with God in heaven, then we must be Disciples of Christ. This requires of us to forsake all things. **Christ must be the ultimate choice of our life.** Choosing Christ might cause us friends, families and our own comfort. We need to have a plan for getting to heaven. Showing up on Sunday's is not enough. We must constantly strive to grow closer to Christ. In short, we need to have a plan for spiritual growth, by **putting God first enables us to practice the virtue of hospitality.** Hospitality is one of the great virtues in the Bible. The ancients believed that each person should be welcomed as though one were welcoming God himself. Jesus moves this virtue into Christian times in today's Gospel, "**Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward... And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple. Truly, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward**" (Mt.10:40-42).

The virtue of hospitality is far more than being a good host at a dinner party. Hospitality means **discovering the presence of God in others – the sick, the poor and strangers,** usually in those whom we least expect. The interesting paradox to all this is that when we are respectful of other's spirituality, then those who do not share our faith are drawn by our hospitality to be open to the truths of Catholicism. The fact is that, most of the people who come into our church do so because they have been **welcomed and respected.** The virtue of hospitality is the virtue of recognizing the presence of God in others and nurturing this presence. When we practice this virtue, then the "**stranger**" among us is no longer a stranger, but a member of the family, welcome, like Elisha in our first reading (2 Kgs.4:10), to enjoy a room in our house, our Church. Jesus promised a hundredfold gain, even in this life, and later in eternal life for those who will live such a life.

Finally, dear friends, Jesus is challenging us to ask ourselves how willing are we to pay the cost of discipleship. Are we serious enough to prefer him over our family and loved ones? Are we willing to carry our cross and follow him? Are we willing to detach ourselves from the enslaving power of material attractions so as to focus more on God and our salvation? Are we ready to be generous to others? May God give us His grace to put Him first in our life; give Him total dedication; commitment and detach us from all worldly attractions, in order to **share our knowledge and whatever we have with others** and follow Him with sincerity of heart, so that He may welcome us into His Kingdom forever and forever. Amen!