

## SUNDAY 23 (C) (revised 2019)

### A) EXAGGERATION FOR EFFECT

- "I can't hear you. I am surrounded by trillions of children"
- Jesus is using a similar way of speaking: using exaggeration for effect
- If any man comes to me without hating his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, yes and his own life too, he cannot be my disciple.
- Does Jesus really mean what he says there? Does he expect us to hate one another, and hate ourselves?
- No. According to the fourth commandment, we should honour our father and our mother.
- And all the commandments are summed up in the two great commands to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.
- we would probably say, not "hate" but "prefer".
- If anyone prefers father or mother to me, if anyone puts family relationships before me, if anyone puts his own self interest before me, he cannot be my disciple.

### B) THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

- This passage comes from St. Luke's Gospel where the writer often emphasises the cost of discipleship, what it really means to be a follower of Jesus.
- Jesus speaks these words as he is approaching Jerusalem, where he knows he will have to face his own passion and crucifixion.
- The journey that Jesus makes is one where his disciples, in one way or another, will have to follow.
- Jesus demands of his disciples total commitment.
- Nothing must interfere with that, not possessions, not family ties, not even life itself.
- The follower of Jesus cannot undertake this lightly.
- The two parables that Jesus tells stress the importance of planning carefully, not starting a task and then leaving it unfinished.

### C) DETACHMENT

- Why should Jesus make such demands on us?
- in fact, he makes these demands for **our** benefit, not his own.
- He has **our** ultimate happiness and fulfilment at heart.
- the daily cross is not intended to exalt suffering for its own sake.
- But rather it is a lesson in detachment, in letting go, in not clinging to things, to people, to relationships which, by their very nature, cannot satisfy us completely.
- He tells us, in other words, that true happiness and fulfilment are to be found in his love, his compassion, his life and power at work in us.

#### D) WHERE DO WE SEEK OUR SECURITY?

- So often we seek security, fulfilment, acceptability in all sorts of areas:
- in THINGS, the material things we own or collect;
- in HEALTH, in looking good, in being able and being strong;
- in DOING THINGS, always being on the go, as though we are saying to ourselves, unless I am busy, I am not worth anything.
- Or we can seek our security in OTHER PEOPLE, in wanting to possess them or cling to them;
- or in a particular PLACE or JOB or HOUSE or a particular WAY of doing things.
- Sometimes we can seek our security in a particular kind of PRAYER or WAY of praying, or a style of liturgy, or a school of spirituality.
- or even in wanting everything neat and tidy, in always being in control of one's life: or as someone once said of me, "of wanting to have all your ducks in a row."

#### E) PENANCES WE DON'T CHOOSE

- At penitential seasons of the year, like Lent and Advent, and every Friday for that matter, we can undertake simple forms of penance, of personal renunciation of our own choosing.
- that's a good practice
- but the best penances of all are the ones we don't choose
- the times when our plans are disrupted, whether in small ways or greater ones
- the times when we feel frustrated
- when we experience the contrariness of people or of things
- perhaps we can learn to see this daily cross as an invitation to let go
- to let go in order to change, to grow, to become more and more free.
- perhaps even to be able to say to God, "I don't want this; I want you."
- if we can begin to see something of the resurrection beyond these crosses, whether great or small, they can become easier to accept.
- Maybe we can come to recognise them as a preparation for that day when we let go of all that we know in the world, say our final goodbyes, and surrender ourselves willingly and lovingly, and once and for all, into the arms of God.