

Sunday Message

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 25 June 2023 • Psalter Week 4



THE CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

(MATTHEW 10: 24-39)

The whole chapter ten of Matthew's Gospel defines what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. And the definition is not for the faint hearted.

When travelling around the countryside driving out demons and spirits and healing the sick, a true disciple must travel light and leave all money and possessions behind. No bag or extra sandals and each disciple will be sent out like sheep among wolves.

Today's Gospel passage continues in similar vein with a warning to the disciples. When they preach the Word of God, they will encounter bitterness and hatred. Jesus has already experienced adversity in his ministry and is very aware that the same animosity awaits his followers. But the key statement from Jesus is one of hope: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."

The future trials of the disciples are being predicted by Jesus and in many ways the same warnings are applicable for the Church today. We face many trials in the form of decreased numbers attending mass, our teachings and beliefs are under constant challenge and scrutiny by an increasingly secular world and there are many conflicting proposals as to the future direction our Church must take in order to survive.

But amidst the adversity that Jesus and his disciples will face, he says to his followers, "Do not be afraid." True disciples of Jesus are always ready for the difficulties that will come. We are supported by a compassionate and loving Christ who cares for us and encourages us through uncertainty. ■

LEARN

In virtue of baptism we become missionary disciples, called to bring the Gospel to the world (*Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 120)

DO

Listen to the Word of God in today's Gospel reading and allow it to transform you towards a life in Christ. Answer the question: How can I show true discipleship in my parish?

SAY

God our Father, surround us with your love, fill us with your grace and strengthen us for your service.

REFLECT

The Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard tells the story of a fire which began in a small town. The chief fireman on duty that day was a very popular man and so all his friends and neighbours turned out in force to help him put out the fire. Their gesture was well intentioned except they all used water pistols to extinguish the inferno. It didn't work! And the fire chief screamed at them. "What on earth do you think you are doing? What do you

think you will achieve with those water pistols?" But the people continued to help. This time they squirted their water pistols in unison to have a greater effect. But again the chief responded, "Get out of here. You're achieving nothing except hindering us from doing what needs to be done.....This is not a place for token contributions."

Kierkegaard told this story urging all Christians to realise that discipleship to Christ means much more than token levels of support to the Church.

It calls for wholehearted and total life commitment.

Today's theme of discipleship is perhaps an invitation for some of us to evaluate our own commitment to the life of the Church. It's easy to see who the workers in the parish are. Those who dedicate hours and hours every week to helping others. But in light of today's Gospel from Matthew, how do we respond to some of the challenges to the faith. With half heartedness or total life commitment? ■

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

The Lord is the strength of his people,
a saving refuge for the one he has anointed.
Save your people, Lord, and bless your
heritage,
and govern them for ever.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

Grant, O Lord,
that we may always revere and love your
holy name,
for you never deprive of your guidance
those you set firm on the foundation of your
love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Jeremiah 20:10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah said:
I hear so many disparaging me,
"Terror from every side!"
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"
All those who used to be my friends
watched for my downfall,
"Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we will master him
and take our revenge!"
But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero.
my opponents will stumble, mastered;
confounded by their failure;
everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be
theirs.
But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with
justice,
who scrutinise the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take on
them,
for I have committed my cause to you.
Sing to the Lord,
praise the Lord,
for he has delivered the soul of the needy
from the hands of evil men.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 68(69):8-10,14,17,33-35

Response:

In your great love, answer me,
O Lord.

- It is for you that I suffer taunts,
that shame covers my face,
that I have become a stranger to my
brothers,
an alien to my own mother's sons.
I burn with zeal for your house
and taunts against you fall on me. (R.)
- This is my prayer to you,
my prayer for your favour.
In your great love, answer me, O God,
with your help that never fails:
Lord, answer, for your love is kind.
in your compassion, turn towards me. (R.)
- The poor when they see it will be glad
and God-seeking hearts will revive;
for the Lord listens to the needy
and does not spurn his servants in their
chains.
Let the heavens and earth give him
praise,
the sea and all its living creatures. (R.)

SECOND READING Romans 5:12-15

A reading from the letter to the Romans.

Sin entered the world through one man, and
through sin death, and thus death has spread
through the whole human race because
everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world
long before the law was given. There was no
law and so no one could be accused of the
sin of "law-breaking", yet death reigned over
all from Adam to Moses, even though their
sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of
breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the
gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it
is certain that through one man's fall so many
died, it is even more certain that divine grace,
coming through the one man, Jesus Christ,
came to so many as an abundant free gift.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! The Word was made flesh
and lived among us;
to all who did accept him he gave power to
become children of God. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 10:26-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: "Do
not be afraid. For everything that is now
covered will be uncovered, and everything
now hidden will be made clear. What I say
to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what
you hear in whispers, proclaim from the
housetops.
"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body
but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who
can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can
you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And
yet not one falls to the ground without your
father knowing. Why, every hair on your head
has been counted. So there is no need to be
afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of
sparrows.

"So if anyone declares himself for me in
the presence of men, I will declare myself for
him in the presence of my Father in heaven.
But the one who disowns me in the presence
of men, I will disown in the presence of my
Father in heaven."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Receive, O Lord, the sacrifice of conciliation
and praise
and grant that, cleansed by its action,
we may make offering of a heart pleasing to
you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The eyes of all look to you, Lord,
and you give them their food in due season.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Renewed and nourished
by the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of
your Son,
we ask of your mercy, O Lord,
that what we celebrate with constant
devotion
may be our sure pledge of redemption.
Through Christ our Lord
Amen.