

## Thirteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, if you were listening deeply to the Gospel, it almost seems scandalous: Jesus tells us: “If anyone love father or mother more than me, they are not worthy of me; or, whoever loves a son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me!” And yet, God tells us in the Decalogue: “Honor your father and your mother!”; so is Jesus contradicting the very commandments of God? Not at all!

Jesus is warning us that discipleship to Him is demanding; to be a true disciple to Him means everything else must be put into second place. He tells us that a true discipleship and friend to Him means that I will be required to carry the cross with Him, and that may require that I turn away from my families wishes and plans for me, to follow Him. Jesus is teaching us that self-sacrifice is an essential part of entering into the Kingdom with Him, and that will sometimes require things of us that are hard, painful and may even sound unreasonable! He is teaching us that Discipleship will sometimes make unreasonable demands upon us that require our total commitment to Him and to His plan for our lives. We whine and complain because we are asked to wear masks and to change our behaviors in the face of this pandemic!

God, in Jesus, knows the path necessary for our lives, but we are often required to follow an ill-defined path. We often rebel at simple request made of our lives by the Church and our Bishops! Jesus does not chart out an easy path to follow, for that always leads to an undemanding life that is ultimately selfish and self-serving. Life is filled with difficult things, difficult choices and difficult people- we know that from our personal experience! Jesus’ way is not the lazy, hazy way, but it is the only way into a life of meaning and a life that leads into His Kingdom. Everyone of you who is a parent, husband or wife, deacon or priest, or has served in the military, or in committed single lives- you know that what He says, is true!

On the other hand, Jesus also teaches us, if we are truly living for God and His Kingdom, in a life of self-surrender to Him and self-giving to others; this life leads to giving glory to God, builds up His kingdom, and He will provide what we need for this journey. Even the seemingly little things we do with great love, Jesus

teaches us, will be rewarded with greatest love, and God is always faithful to His promises!

St. Paul imminently understood this: we must die to ourselves and our self-centered desires, in order to rise with Christ and live the life of the Spirit, a life that gives true meaning and satisfaction to our lives.