

If anyone comes after Christ...wants to follow Him...to be my disciple...and is not willing to denounce family and friends; the world and its enticements; all its power, prestige, and greed; and does not renounce all your possessions, desires, and pleasures...Whoever does not pick up their cross; with all the suffering and pain that life can dish out; with all the persecutions and rejections; even hatred - betrayal - murder and follow after Christ to Calvary, and to the empty tomb on Easter morning - cannot be His disciple...*Now, that is one great sale pitch!!*

To be a disciple of Christ means; We must recollect our minds - shutting out distractions - we have to quiet ourselves – go into our inner room of our soul...to be alone with the Master and Teacher...We need time, lots of time, to be in God's presence and there...calculate with our minds, our reason and logic - not with our feelings, appetites, passions and emotions - (but with all the powers of our intellect and reason)... come to a prudent decision in what course of virtuous action and firm Catholic behavior will help us obtain our goal, our salvation, our deeper more real relationship with God as our Father...

Since salvation is not guaranteed and as Catholics, we don't believe in universal salvation for all. We must ignore "*the crowd*" with its insults and negativity. We must ignore those who would try to get us off track - with errors and heresy. We must ignore those who laugh at us, or tells; "you are wasting your time" or to conform to their mediocrity and laziness.

We continue to move forward so that when we meet our Divine Judge - when we see Christ face to face - when He shows up unexpectedly...We can rejoice with Him for having overcome the obstacles – the temptations - the pitfalls - that were set up along the way - to prove our love for Him. Because - by overcoming each and every emotional and psychological attachment. We reject everything even our own wants and needs - so we can have Him alone. We empty ourselves so that we can be full of Him. Giving so that we can better receive. Pardoning so that we too can be forgiven - this is what the Saints would call - "*normal everyday Christian behavior.*"

Being a disciple of Christ is so easy – if we would let it be...if we would train for it...get control of ourselves...to be open to the possibility of actually achieving holiness...This way, this truth, this life - in, with, and through Christ's, is a gentle path that leads to Life - it is life giving, were all our burden's are light - were sadness becomes joy...and the happiness never ends.

This is what is meant in the first reading; "***by the counsel of the Holy Spirit the path ways are made straight***" by following God and His will for your life - things get straighten out, we become righteous, becoming peaceful and a joy.

Haven't you every hear someone say... "*O he is lucky he married her – she straighten him right out*"? What is meant is that - his wife gave him a clear direction in the way things would be going from now on.

Well, the same is true with God. He wants to show us the straightest way to heaven. The road with the least amount of obstacles and dangers - one that is healthy and life giving - not immoral, or hurtful, or a waste of our time. But it is not just about being on the right path that leads to Life; it is also about a relationship that should be developing - as you walk the path with Jesus our Savior...

A relationship that becomes so familiar, so natural, so easy, it becomes like family...The Lord literally welcomes us as members of His family - not a servants or slaves - not as worthless sinners but as beloved - chosen - privileged - adored - preferred - honored - sacred - sanctified - and consecrated to the Lord and set apart by God for God - as His very own - friends.

This is what the disciples of Christ are - they are people God has set apart to be His very own friends! This is select group of people live their Christian faith - Not with lip service and laziness; not with deception and half-truths...but with - *hard work – perseverance – determination* - and this is what makes them His friends...willing to endure all for Him they overcome the Devil, the world and themselves and have freely chosen Christ as their Lord and God - as their all in this life and the life to come. They chose God over everything else!

What a wonderful and beautiful thing - to witness - when someone lives their Catholic faith well...to see a heart convert to Christ...a soul won over to His Mother...it can put a lump in your throats - a slight impulse in our own souls...that maybe we too - could live our Christian faith...that maybe we too - could be a disciple of Christ...not only in word - not in our imagination - but in fact - because of our charitable actions...that holiness is within our reach, and we too can become the Saints and make His Will our Will... what He loves, our greatest desire...

*The only thing stopping you is you!*...a Disciple is one who builds - endeavors - searches - creates. Finishing the work started by someone else - for someone else. He continues to care about the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church, your parish, your school that existed before you - and will continue to exist - long after you are gone.

We must be firm, having a strong foundation, and work harder, to continue to remove the filth and heresy that has entered our church and is slowly killing her...(it's not just the Bishops and Priests responsibility to clean up the sickness that has entered into the Church)...*The greatest sin of our generation is that we have become so entitled - that we have stopped living for others - and it should be obvious - there is no happiness, no salvation in this kind of sin, which we have freely continue to chose - by say it is someone else job, or responsibility.*

We can, We must, become in this Life, what we were made to be – called to be! Do you believe that? Do we believe we can be what your Father in Heaven has called us, make us, created us to be? Or will you chose to be something else, like a source of division, hurt, darkness, even sin, and evil?

Therefore, in a truly religious sense – Choose Life! Choose Holiness! Choose God for your Life! - We need to snap out of it, wake up from the fog Satan has us living in, and then take a big bold step in the right direction. In a most profound and deeply psychological and spiritual way to start to grow up - no longer searching for entitlements, but seeking to love and service others.

*We desperately need, as St Paul said, “to stop acting childish and infantile...stop gossiping and backbiting...stop causing disunity...stop choosing and causing so much drama, problems, troubles, and difficulties and instead choose to stand for something!”* By first, living a holy life...taking the moral way... the road less-traveled...passing through that narrow gate...living the virtues that lead to God... We need to practice what we all learned in kindergarten - *“keeping our hands to ourselves...and mind our own business...and a whole lot more prayer!”*

St Paul continued, that part of this growing up process included - actually fighting against these temptation that attack us. A return to the stable order of objective truth and reason...instead of letting our passions, appetites, and feelings guiding our way to only pleasure.

Let us stop complaining and lying. Let us stop consuming each other, as St. Paul predicted. Turning into that evil that hardens our hearts against our fellow man. Let us start today, in living virtuous lives - working with God, to make something wonderful with your life...because this is what we are called to do as His disciples.

Life is worth living - worth living well - So make that choice to put your life at the service of others because a life well lived (a holy virtuous one) is one of the greatest treasure in this life and the cause of the most wonderful joys in the life to come.

Therefore, let us this evening reflect on the words our Father in Heaven spoke to St. Francis of Assisi, in a way of giving St. Francis, his marching orders, knowledge of God's Will for his life, *“Go and repair my Church!”* So now, the same Father is saying to us, *“Go, and repair My Church” - by your faith, by your hope, and your charity. Go and repair by your prayer and your fidelity to Truth.”*

So that Christ, may one day say to you, His faithful Disciple, *“Thanks to you, my Church will again become My house.”*