

Readings

Wis 9:13-18b

Ps 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14, 17

Phmn 9-10, 12-17

Lk 14:25-33

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This Gospel is clearly about Discipleship and its choices. Three examples are given. The first is in the harshest of terms: to be my disciple you must hate father and mother. Jesus speaks using hyperbole – a literary device that uses extreme exaggeration to create a strong impression or emphasize a point; it's not meant to be taken literally but rather to evoke emotion or create a vivid image in the listener's mind. We know these words are hyperbole because we know the overwhelming content of the Gospel message: Love. You are called to love God and neighbor; but should you be forced to make a choice, a disciple knows the answer. If you won't go to help the poor because your mother doesn't want you to, whom did you love more? Jesus or your mother? If you can't love Jesus above all, you can't be a disciple.

The second lesson is about total commitment. Jesus bore his cross and, should it come to this, you must too. Thus, the Christian martyrs shine brightly in our worship. Would you risk your life to protect someone you love? This second lesson is especially exigent when it comes to the political realm. Do you choose the Gospel over political policies? Sometimes we expose our hypocrisy by thinking we can live in both realms; we are just fooling ourselves by living with these blatant contradictions and not carrying the cross of Christ first and foremost. A disciple knows the answer and abhors hypocrisy. The Christian must strongly detest the taking of

hostages by Hamas and we must call for their immediate release. We cannot tolerate the starvation of people which is the result of the policies of the current Israeli government. We should stand up to protect the rights of all people especially immigrants. We can hate the sin but never hate the sinner. To create a place such as Alligator Alcatraz is an abomination; there is nothing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that permits treating humans in that way.

Lastly, the question a disciple must ask: Who is in charge? Do I possess my possessions or do my possessions possess me? As Augustine challenges us, do we love the gift more than the giver? I love my adult children, but I will never say anything that might upset their unchristian behavior. I love my friends but I don't have the courage to talk about their self-destructive behavior. Do you fear the loss of their affection or do you love them? A disciple knows the answer.