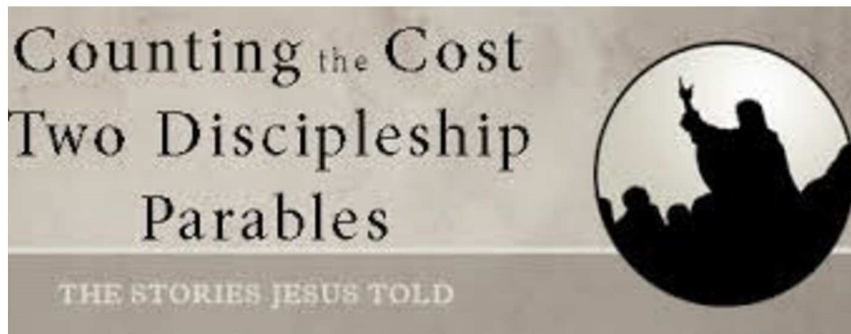


PLEASE JOIN US ON THURSDAY AT 7.30PM IN THE PARISH CENTRE

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL



Rathfarnham
Lectio Divina
Group

Please join us on
Thursday 7.30 pm
in the Parish Centre to
reflect on the Gospel
of the week.

23rd Sunday of
Ordinary Time

September
7th 2025

Luke 14:25 Now large crowds were traveling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ “Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Discipleship of Jesus takes many forms and we interpret this passage in the light of the particular form of discipleship to which we have committed ourselves – marriage, parenting, friendship, career, religious life or priesthood. We think of other commitments we and others make: to social change for example – bringing about reconciliation between ethnic groups or religions, or reforming economic, educational or political systems, locally or internationally.

Jesus’ language is startling at a first reading, harsh even, for example its stress on “hating” and the need to give up “all one’s possessions”. Our meditation must feel the passion of Jesus as well as uplift us. The secret is to let the passage speak to our experiences of grace, of Jesus alive in the world today, and in each of us too, to the extent that we are his presence for others. It will also be a call to conversion of course, because we are often not like him.

Many leaders today (even in the Church) are afraid of losing their followers, the “great crowds who accompany them” so rather than challenge them, they feed them with empty slogans which pander to their worst instincts, for example their feelings of superiority to others. Or else they make demands on others that they do not live up to themselves. We celebrate leaders like Jesus.

We can shift the focus of our meditation from the person of Jesus to the process of decision making or coming to maturity which he calls us to. We all experience turning points in our lives, when in response to an inner call, we make choices which bring us to a new level of maturity. These moments of grace always involve finding our true identity by renouncing attachments – to people, projects, ideas, institutions. We decide to “carry our own cross,” to discover our own destiny, the greatness to which we have been called.

So long as we derive our identity from others, even those closest to us, we remain immature.

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels, Year C

KIND OF WRITING

The warnings about the cost of discipleship may be found also in Matthew 10:37-38; 5:13; Mk 9:49-50. The two parables are really wisdom warnings before you undertake a project.

Verse 26 This is a saying taken from the Q source (or perhaps a variant oral tradition). Matthew’s “love more” is much less harsh. Luke, using the hyperbole of the prophet, emphasises that the primary loyalty of the Christian transcends even the fundamental loyalty, not to say love, towards family. Cf. 8:19-21 and 9:59-60. To hate in Hebrew also has the connotation of to leave aside.

KIERAN O’MAHONY OSA - www.tarsus.ie

This is one of those passages that makes us stop in our tracks. How come Jesus tells us that we cannot be his followers if we do not first hate our parents and other family members?

It might be helpful to remember that in the ancient world hyperbole or exaggerated speech was an accepted way of making a point and that clearly Jesus is using hyperbole when he speaks here. Still it seems like a counter-productive way to present your case.

The parables that follow this hard saying help to explain exactly what Jesus meant. He wants everyone to know that being his follower cannot be viewed as some kind of optional extra and so, before we decide for him, we should sit down and think about what it entails and then ask ourselves, 'Am I prepared to commit myself to that extent?'

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand, Year C

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. The passage is a call to both radical and practical discipleship. When have you found that in order to achieve a certain objective you had to make it a priority, and then take the practical steps necessary to reach your goal? What were the benefits to you when you did this?
2. 'Hate' is prophetic exaggeration for the uncompromising loyalty Jesus seeks in disciples. There may be times when people make demands in conflict with fidelity to another relationship. This can be painful. When have you found that being clear about your priorities helped you in that situation?
3. Jesus uses parables here to tell us that in important human affairs we do not settle for vague aspirations. When have you found that some element of practical planning has been necessary to make progress with a project? What has this taught you about making the most of your life and of your time?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

**Recently Deceased
pray for him**

Today's gospel is troubling. Does Jesus really expect us to hate our families, friends and even ourselves in order to be his followers? The call to 'hate' our family is not to be taken literally, but is a call to break free from any habit or relationship that is holding us back. If you reflect back on a time when you gained a significant new insight, you may find that it involved letting go of something you were attached to.

The **Season of Creation** is a time to reconnect with the beauty of God's creation so that we can set out on more sustainable paths. This involves breaking away from systems on which we are dependent and embracing a gentler way of walking on this earth. It requires a drastic change of heart so that we can set out on new paths as a global community.

Encourage your family to make one small change this week, such as ensuring all waste is correctly recycled or composted, using public transport, or walking/cycling when possible. We start with ourselves.

TRÍONA DOHERTY & JANE MELLETT - Go Deeper

Jesus uses different examples, but his teaching is the same: whoever undertakes a major project rashly without first examining whether he has the resources and the ability to achieve what he wants, runs the risk of failure.

His warning takes on great relevance in these times of crisis, so decisive for the future of our faith. It would be highly irresponsible today for the disciples of Jesus not to know what they want; what they want to achieve, and what resources they need to attain their purpose.

When will we sit down to join forces, reflect together and cooperatively devise the plan we need to follow? We are going through an unprecedented socio-cultural change:

Is it possible to spread the faith in this new world being born without knowing it well and understanding it from within?

Is it possible to help people gain an understanding of the gospel if we do not know how men and women today think and feel, or if we do not understand the language they speak?

Is it not a mistake to respond to the challenges of today with dated irrelevant policies?

As the parable warns, an unfinished tower would only invited the contempt of people toward the builder. We must not forget the realistic and humble words of Jesus inviting his disciples to become the leaven in the midst of people, or salt to bring a new flavour to the lives of all.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA – Following in the Footsteps of Jesus, Year C

from **POPE FRANCIS**

"I invite everyone to be bold and creative in this task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelization in their respective communities."

.....The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters," (THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL 33)

"The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion ... whereby the effects of our encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in our relationship with the world around us. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an option or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." (LAUDATO SI 217)