

PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH
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23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 04 September 2022

The Wisdom Required to be a Disciple

Our Christian life requires a wisdom that is far beyond the reach of our natural powers. This is why St Paul emphasizes the role of God's Spirit in our Christian life when he says that "the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God. [And] we have received the Spirit that comes from God, to teach us to understand the gifts he has given us." St Paul goes ahead to quote the passage in our first reading today, "Who can know the mind of the Lord, so who can teach him? It is God himself who gives us the Wisdom that makes it possible for us to understand the things of God. In other words, we are taught by God's Wisdom, who is Christ.

This consciousness of the incomprehensibility of God prepares us for the shocking revelation we find in our Gospel. Jesus tells us that anyone who does not carry his/her cross and come after him cannot be his disciple. A more explicit way of saying this is that no one can be his disciple unless he/she gives up his/her possessions. And such possessions include father, mother, wife, husband, children, brothers, sisters and even one's own life. Surprisingly, these are not usually in the category of things we call possessions. They are actually important relationships in our life without which we can barely survive. Even our life is included as part of our possessions. This list goes to indicate that we need not even talk of material possession, which have absolutely no place in the economy of discipleship.

But when Jesus says that we *must* hate our significant others, including our own life, in order to truly be his disciples, what does he mean? The first point to note is the language. A similar language is employed by Jesus' in other saying regarding the cost of discipleship: 'Let the dead bury their dead,' 'Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head,' 'Father against son, son against father,' and now 'Hate your mother and father, even your own life' and 'Give up all your possessions.' The seeming extreme of these demands may be due to the Semitic way of saying things: they tend to use superlatives rather than comparatives. Yet this does not detract from the seriousness of what Jesus means to say, which is that the following of Jesus (discipleship) requires a radical decision.

What is more? That radical decision is best made at the start, just like any builder would first take into account the cost of the whole house or an army going to war would calculate the cost and probability of success. There is an emphasis on the danger of starting off on the journey of discipleship without taking account of the cost, thereby falling along the way.

Let us return briefly to the issue of calling our vital relationships (father, mother, wife, etc) possessions that must be hated in order to be a disciple. I would suggest that we see the use of the word 'possessions' as whatever is in our life that possesses us. In other words, those things that we care about so much that they do not give us the freedom required to follow Jesus. If our family

or our own life becomes a huge preoccupation for us, we may not have the freedom to follow Jesus. Unless, of course, we can turn these relationships into avenues of service and discipleship.

Ultimately, Jesus is inviting us to come with him along the road that he himself has taken. He knows the nature of that road, that is why is alerting us not to minimize its demands. There is no turning back and we need to pray for the required courage and wisdom which far exceed our own human power.

NOTICES

Pakistani Floods Appeal

Devastating floods have hit Pakistan, leaving millions in urgent need of help to survive. A third of the country is now underwater (that's an area almost the size of Great Britain). Your donation will help CAFOD's local partners support communities with clean drinking water, food, emergency medical assistance and shelter. Please pray for those affected and donate now at cafod.org.uk/give. **Donation envelopes are at the back of the church. Thank you.**

Celebration of Penafranchia

There will be a Penafranchia thanksgiving celebration of Holy Mass on behalf of the Filipino Bicol Association at 2.00pm on Sunday 18th September here in our Church. All are welcome.

Teresian Prayer Group

The aim of the Group is for its members to grow in prayer following the teachings of St Teresa of Avila. Meetings have a talk by a distinguished Carmelite speaker, a time of quiet prayer, and small group discussion and sharing. Membership of the Group is open to all and is free. Monthly meetings will run from October 2022 to May 2023, at two venues: here at Kensington on a Saturday 10.45 am to 12 noon; and at the Notting Hill Carmelite Monastery on a Sunday from 11.00 am to 12.30 pm. Find out about the Group and register at the Introductory Meetings at Kensington 11.00 am on Saturday 24 September and at Notting Hill at 11.00 am on Sunday 11 September. Further information is on our website at <https://carmelitechurch.org/activities/teresian-prayer-group/> and on posters at the back of the Church.

The Season of Creation September 1 – October 4

The Season of Creation is an annual celebration uniting Christians in prayer and action for the protection of our common home. The idea of celebrating 1 September as a day of prayer for creation began at the wish of the Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios in 1989, and was endorsed by Pope Francis in 2015. The season runs from September 1 to October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi. During this season we are encouraged to pray and engage in community events in order to deepen our relationship with our God, our neighbour and the earth we share, being ever more attentive to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

Registration for First Holy Communion

We are also now accepting registrations for the next group of children to prepare for First Holy Communion. Classes will commence September end. If you have children for first holy communion, please do register them as soon as you can. Children must be 7yrs old by 31st August. The registration form is on our website www.carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes and at the back of the church.

Readers Required

We are looking for more Readers/Lectors to proclaim the Word of God during our liturgy. If you would like to help with this ministry please do make contact with us.

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£657
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£51

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD