

Today's Gospel is the conclusion of the instructions and consolations that we have heard Jesus offering to his disciples during the past few weeks. In this passage, Jesus summarizes both the costs of discipleship and its rewards. The conditions of discipleship outlined in Matthew's Gospel may appear harsh. Yet they underline for us a truth—choosing anything with one's whole heart has consequences. Choosing life with Christ means that every relationship we have must be understood from a new perspective. Jesus explains the difficulties of discipleship, yet reveals that those who welcome the disciples have also welcomed him.

Today's Gospel also highlights for us the importance of hospitality in the Christian life. To welcome another in Jesus' name is to extend hospitality to Jesus himself.

Lectio Divina with the Sunday Gospel

Lectio Divina means 'divine reading'. It is a way to pray using the holy scriptures in a step-by-step process. Gather the entire family around and make the sign of the Cross. Light a candle.

Leader: "Holy Spirit, you inspired the authors of Sacred Scripture to write what you wanted us to know for the sake of our salvation. Inspire us now to hear those words not only with our ears, but our hearts, so that we might know your saving Word for us today."

- Have one person **read** the scripture slowly, out loud and have a few moments of silence afterwards. (It may be helpful for everyone to have a copy of the reading).
- **Read** the scripture again out loud and choose a single word or short phrase that touches, speaks or surprises you. Share with everyone.
- **Read** the scripture out loud one more time and discuss what is happening directly in the text.
- **Meditate** on what God is doing now in our lives through this text.
- **Respond** to what God is doing through prayer.
- **Contemplate** on what God is asking of me through this text and how to use these words as a gift for others through my actions.
- After a period of silence, end with the Sign of the Cross.

The Holy Gospel for July 2, 2023

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus said to his Apostles:

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me
is not worthy of me;
and whoever loves son or daughter more than me
is not worthy of me;
and whoever does not take up their cross and follow me
is not worthy of me.

Whoever finds their life will lose it,
and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.
Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.

Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet
will receive a prophet's reward;
and whoever welcomes a righteous person
in the name of a righteous person
will receive the reward of the righteous;

and whoever gives even a cup of cold water
to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple-
truly I tell you-
that person will not lose their reward.”

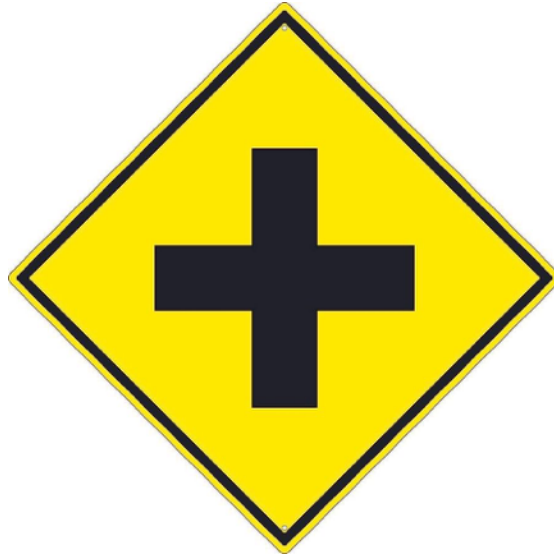
The Gospel of the Lord.

Family Activities

- ❖ Reflect on a time you attended a party or some sort of gathering. What made you feel welcome and what made you not feel welcome? Jesus tells us that as his disciples, we are to welcome others with a spirit of love and friendship. As disciples of Jesus, we are to love Jesus with our whole hearts and we are to welcome, or receive, others with love, friendship, and generosity. When we choose to be loving and welcoming, we are showing our love for Jesus and for all people.

(see over)

(Family Activities continued...)



- ❖ What does the traffic sign above indicate? It is a crossroad sign. In traffic, it means that 2 roads are coming together at one location and you must choose to go straight or turn. A decision has to be made.

When someone says we have come to a 'crossroad' in life, a decision also has to be made - a decision that will bring us in a different direction. Jesus says some difficult things in today's Gospel. The Gospel reminds us that when we choose to follow Jesus, we might face some crossroads—times when we must part company and choose a different way. We must choose to act in ways that show that we are disciples of Jesus. Jesus does not say that being his disciple will be easy. But he does promise that our life of discipleship will be rewarded.

- ❖ Reflect on what your priorities are in life, as an individual and as a family. Jesus reminds us that if we put anything above our relationship with God, then we may lose it all. Our number one priority has to be our living out the relationship with GOD. What are some things you can do so that your relationship with God shows that it is a priority.

Prayer

**All-powerful and ever-living God,
when your Son Jesus sent his disciples to further your kingdom,
you kept them safe through their journeys.**

Protect us, your servants, who also strive to follow your Son.

Walk by our side to help us.

Be our companion and our strength on the way.

Be our refuge in every adversity.

**Lead us, O Lord, as we share your kingdom with others,
and bring us at last to the eternal haven of salvation.**

Amen