

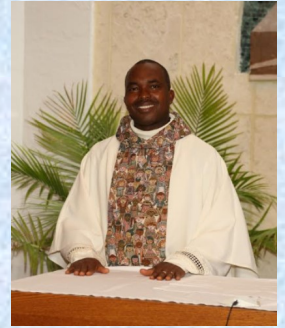
Homily Rerun: September 4, 2016 ~ Fr. Seno

My dear friends, “anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple,” words taken from our Gospel passage (Lk 14:25-33), show us how God constantly calls us to a higher and higher level of commitment. God wants us to love him with all our soul, mind, and body. Today, he demands total renunciation of others, of things and of self. Why is this total renunciation a necessary element to follow the Lord? Because God wants us to love him with all our intellect, our will, our resources, and all that we are. This reminds me of a Catholic traditional song that calls us to yield wholeheartedly to Jesus:

Chorus: I surrender all, I surrender all
All to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender.

All to Jesus I surrender,
All to Him I freely give,
All to Jesus I surrender,
Humbly at His feet I bow.

I will ever love and trust Him,
In His presence daily live
Worldly pleasures all forsaken,
Take me Jesus, take me now.



Beloved, Jesus was not deceived by the apparent “high success of his work of evangelization”. He was interested in not just quantity but the quality of his flock. While great crowds were following Jesus, Jesus was certainly aware of how much of their hearts were with him, and how much were elsewhere. Even within us today in this church many are body present but their mind is at Walmart or Walgreens. He knew whatever obstacles and tensions and frustrations we are dealing with. He knew the challenges we are facing. He knew that some of them were not truly convinced; they have other interests. Some do not believe the Eucharist they receive and even ask questions what wine did we drink at Mass today? It is not wine but the blood of Christ after the words of consecration. Jesus “turned and addressed them, ‘If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.’” What a teaching! One may ask, “Why on earth should I hate my father or mother or wife in order to follow Jesus?” Dear friends, Jesus is simply speaking about total consecration. We renounce all in order to place them in God’s hands. All things must be consecrated to God in Christ. Nothing should stand outside of his control. Whatever we cannot renounce for the sake of Christ stands between us and God. It could be bad influence from our acquaintances. It could be the problem of allowing what we have to supersede the love of God, it may be my car, money, houses or possessions. Even our attainments in life could be occasion for pride. Whatever it is, we must surrender all to the Lord.

My dear friends, this total consecration is important to prevent us from doubting the LOVE AND MERCY OF GOD. It could arise when we lose a loved one; or loss of job, or loss of home, or life disappointments and we begin to wonder if God really exists. We query God and get angry at God for the problems of life. We forget completely the love and blessing God has shown us because of one crisis or another. Just consider the measure of love God already demonstrated for us: He sent his Son to die for us and take away our sins that we might have everlasting life. Why then should the problems of life shake up our faith and confidence in God? Thus, Jesus states unequivocally, “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Remember my dear friends that our Lord carried His cross to the end, so your cross should not deter you from reaching your goal in life which is in Jesus. Let try and seek the face of God in whatever you do in life.

Dear brothers and sisters, because of the challenges of life, many have fallen away from the Church. They have their own idea about what the Church should preach and practice. So when the Church fails to live up to their expectation they quit. When Jesus preached concerning his Body and Blood (John 6:66), many of His disciples abandoned him. When St. Paul and the apostles preached on the Mystery of the Cross (1Corinthians 1:22-23), it was considered as foolishness to the hearers. And we still face such challenges in the Church today. The Mysteries of God are no longer appreciated; life problems, difficulties and challenges become the utmost preoccupation of Christians. Against this background, Jesus employed two very powerful illustrations to state why we must stick to the path he has shown us. We truly have no better option. Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion? Otherwise, after laying the foundation and finding himself unable to finish the work the onlookers should laugh at him and say, 'This one began to build but did not have the resources to finish.' Or what king marching into battle would not first sit down and decide whether with ten thousand troops he can successfully oppose another king advancing upon him with twenty thousand troops? But if not, while he is still far away, he will send a delegation to ask for peace terms.

My dear friends, this means that, as Christians, we must always evaluate what it means to be a Christian. We must always be ready to declare like the apostles: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). May God grant us the faith to always persevere, for in God’s will is our peace, now and forever. Amen