

# Sunday, September 4, 2016

## Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

### Mass Readings:

1st Reading: Wisdom 9:13-18

Responsorial: Psalm 90:3-6, 12-17

2nd Reading: Philemon 9-10, 12-17

Gospel: Luke 14:25-33

## Answering Jesus Call to Follow Him No Matter What the Cost

*Which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost? (Luke 14:28)*

Few of us have needed to build a tower, much less review troops before battle. But we all have plans that require us to assess our resources. *Do I have what it takes to get that degree? . . . to care for a foster child or elderly relative? . . . to lead that Bible study in my parish?*

The woman being canonized today certainly had what it takes. As she made her life “something beautiful for God,” St. Teresa of Calcutta showed the determination that is the hallmark of every disciple. “The first step to becoming holy,” she once said, “is to will it.”

This can sound intimidating, especially if you don’t see yourself as a particularly determined person. But Jesus wants to share the secret that Mother Teresa and every other saint discovered: sheer willpower isn’t the whole story. The truly critical factor is God’s desire.

If you want your life to be something beautiful for God, know that he wants the same thing. Know also that he has all the grace you need to accomplish it. He has filled you with his Spirit; he gives you his Body and Blood at Mass; he walks beside you every day, helping you when you stumble and cheering you on when you succeed. He is 100 percent behind your desire to build a “tower” that glorifies him.

So whenever you sit down to calculate the cost of following Jesus—especially when that cost seems too high—take comfort from these words from St. Teresa of Calcutta:

You belong to him. Nothing can separate you from him. That one sentence is important to remember. He will be your joy, your strength. If you hold onto that sentence, temptations and difficulties will come, but nothing will break you. . . . My prayer for you is that you . . . answer Jesus’ call to you with the simple word, “Yes.”

*“Jesus, I say yes! I will follow you no matter the cost.”*

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***Questions for Reflection or Discussion***

1. The first reading begins with these words: “Who can know God’s counsel, or who can conceive what the LORD intends?” These questions are very challenging ones, and the first reading goes on to answers them: “Or whoever knew your counsel, except you had given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?”
  - Do you believe that even though we are weak finite humans that we, as Christians, have been given God’s wisdom and have received the Holy Spirit--in order to know the mind of God? In what way?
  - How much time do you spend praying and asking the Holy Spirit for God’s wisdom (for example, to better understand God’s plan for your life or your children’s)?
  - What steps can you take to make the power of the Holy Spirit a greater reality in your life?
2. In the responsorial psalm, the psalmist asks the Lord to “Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain wisdom of heart.”
  - What does the term “numbering our days aright” mean to you? How well are you at doing this?
  - Why do you think numbering our days aright is tied to gaining “wisdom of heart”?
3. In the letter to Philemon St. Paul returns Onesimus, a man who had been Philemon’s slave, and asks Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother and a partner – a brother in Christ instead of as a slave. Even today, there are people we can “enslave,” for example, by feeling superior, by not forgiving, by holding ourselves aloof, or by choosing to avoid them.
  - How may God be asking you to “set free” people in your life who may fall into any of these categories?
4. In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the cross each of us is asked to bear as his disciple. However, Jesus also tells us elsewhere that his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Matthew 11:30).
  - When you have followed the Lord’s will during a difficult time, no matter the cost, what has been your experience?
5. In the Gospel, Jesus also proclaims these challenging words: “In the same way, anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33).
  - What do you think Jesus meant by these words?
  - Are there possessions that you have that have the potential to get in the way of being a disciple of Christ? If so, how far are you willing to go in taking the required actions to follow Christ’s words?
6. The meditation ends with these words: “So whenever you sit down to calculate the cost of following Jesus—especially when that cost seems too high—take comfort from these words from St. Teresa of Calcutta: You belong to him. Nothing can separate you from him. That one sentence is important to remember. He will be your joy, your strength. If you hold onto that sentence, temptations and difficulties will come, but nothing will break you. . . . My prayer for you is that you . . . answer Jesus’ call to you with the simple word, ‘Yes.’”
  - Jesus wants us to count the cost of following him. How would you describe the costs in your own life of following Jesus?
  - Jesus spoke these words to St. Paul: “My grace is sufficient” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Do you believe that these words of Jesus apply to you, i.e., Jesus has given you the grace to overcome any costs of following him? In what ways has he done this?
7. Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord for the grace to say yes to his call to always follow him and to be his disciple. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as a starting point.

***“Jesus, I say yes! I will follow you no matter the cost.”***

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is in partner relations for **The Word Among Us Partners**, (<http://www.waupartners.org/>); a ministry of **The Word Among Us** ([www.wau.org](http://www.wau.org)) to the military, prisoners, women with crisis pregnancies or who have had abortions, and college students. He is

As posted on the Catholic Charismatic Renewal National Service Committee’s website: [www.nsc-chariscenter.org](http://www.nsc-chariscenter.org)

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