

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

GOSPEL

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Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Anyone who prefers father or mother to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who prefers son or daughter to me is not worthy of me. Anyone who does not take his cross and follow in my footsteps is not worthy of me. Anyone who finds his life will lose it; anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it.

'Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me; and those who welcome me welcome the one who sent me.

'Anyone who welcomes a prophet will have a prophet's reward; and anyone who welcomes a holy man will have a holy man's reward.

'If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, then I tell you solemnly, he will most certainly not lose his reward.'

(Matthew 10:37–42)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- At the time Matthew's Gospel was being written, Jewish families were being literally split by those who were making the decision to move away from traditional Jewish beliefs and follow Christ.
- Even though family relationships are vitally important, 'the first vocation of a Christian is to follow Christ'.

EXPLORING THE WORD

To follow Jesus means putting other important relationships second. It means taking up the cross and perhaps facing the same fate that Jesus met—persecution, suffering, death—but remaining faithful leads to eternal life. In ancient times, a person's agent was seen to be the person themselves, and here Jesus is giving great dignity to the apostolate of following him by saying it derives from the Father himself through Jesus.

In the Scriptures, a prophet is a person who speaks for God. To be a prophet, one must have a very clear understanding of what God wants, and the task is to transmit that message to the people. There are many instances of the people rejecting the message of the prophets. Some scholars translate 'holy man' as 'just man' or someone who does the will of God. To recognise and welcome the truth is to be a disciple. The cost of discipleship may be high but the rewards are great.

- Tell stories of biblical characters and what it cost them to respond to God's will—for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Mary the mother of Jesus.
- Discuss modern figures who have paid a high price for their faith, such as St Oscar Romero, Maximilian Kolbe and so on.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Share with each other stories about a time when you were made to feel welcome or you offered hospitality to someone else.
- How welcome do you feel in this journey?
- Have some people reacted badly to your decision to approach the Catholic Church?
- What does it mean to lose your life so you can find it?
- This week, make a special effort to be open and welcoming to someone you would not normally associate with. If you are able to, offer hospitality to someone.
- Repeat this often as a mantra this week:

Lord, as you welcome me, may I be open to welcome others.

