

FR.TK.REFLECTIONS 22nd SUNDAY YEAR-A 2023.

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP:

The author of the first reading passage is prophet Jeremiah (Jer.20:7-9). He was convinced and thought the people will **respect and be grateful to him for preaching the word of God to them**. His job to tell the people to **change their ways of life and turn to God** didn't go well with the people. They **turned against him, ridiculed him, threw him to jail and even attempted to kill him**. He turned to God and complained **you duped me and tricked me, you have seduced me, you have taken me by force** I have become laughingstock, they make fun of me, they have insulted me. Am sure many priests and even faithful have faced such challenging situations whenever they stand for the right thing in our current society. Do we turn to God?

Could we say this is the cost of being a servant and disciple of Christ regardless of what your vocation might be!

In our gospel it is all in black and white that to follow Christ involves **suffering, dedication and sacrifice**. Christ is telling his disciples as well as you and me **if you want to follow me, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow me (mt.16:24)**.

*This is the qualification of being the follower of Christ. We must move from that comfort deceptive zone in our life, **face the realities of life situations, be focused on the way forward** and face the truth of the matter. we must **die to self seeking, self promotions and wake up to life situation in the society and the world.***

Christ is telling us we must carry not only that wooden tree he carried to redeem us but also the **daily crosses of that child who cannot understand and get anything academically, that youth addicted to different substances and can't keep job that husband who is cheating on you and has become violent, that wife who has turned to be alcoholic that Neighbour constantly making life unbearable to you due to his dogs, that relationship which has failed, financial burden, health**

.issues draining all the family finance these sometimes are heavy crosses to bear.

Last Sunday we had Peter affirming Christ as the **son** of the living God and the **messiah**, Jesus declared him as the Rock to establish his church on. He was given the keys, authority and power.

There seem to be change of guard today and shift of command. Peter is telling Jesus what to do. Peter seems very firm in using his key powers beginning with Christ himself

He takes Jesus aside and instruct him on how it shouldn't happen on him (mt.16:22).

In response Jesus takes Peter and tells him **off, get behind me Satan**. Jesus sees Peter as an obstacle in accomplishing his mission. **He must take that wooden tree, carry, be nailed on it, redeem the world through it, and give salvation to humanity through that tree.**

He confronts his disciples that to be his followers they **must take that wooden tree carry and follow him the same is being applied to you and me.**

This is the only way to the kingdom of God, there is no **short cut, freeway, superhighway, Eastern nor western by pass, the only way is to face the cross**. That wooden tree doesn't spare anyone regardless of who you are **or what you have each has a cross to carry.**

No one like facing all these crosses and we try to **deny them, kick them aside, forget them we want to be comfortable in life**. sometimes we want to feel the crosses are not there.

The cross is the truth of the sacrifice Jesus did for you and me.

It is also a proof of our discipleship to him.

The cross teaches us sacrifice and dedication.

IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE TODAY HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS!.