

## 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

One day after Mass a parishioner came up to me with this news: “Father, I’ve just taken the diocesan training to become a communion minister. What else do I do before helping out at the parish?” I said, with a twinkle in my eye, “Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor. Then come, distribute communion.” And to his credit, he actually thought about it for a minute.

If you’re a regular member of the cathedral, you’re probably wondering if I’m sending the same message to you. Next week is the Annual Catholic Appeal for the diocese and the annual pledge drive for the parish. Our Morning Glory Ministries, which helps the homeless, is conducting its annual fundraiser. We are raising money for a new building. We’re offering a financial planning seminar this week. Before the end of the year we’ll have second collections for Mission Sunday, for the Diocese of Queenstown South Africa, and for the retirement fund for religious men and women. You may think I’m expecting you to say to God what Peter said to Jesus, “We have given up everything to follow you.” Well, yes, Jesus commands all of us to dedicate our lives entirely for the sake of the gospel.

This **morning/weekend** we celebrate the annual Blue Mass, when we invite members of the police department as well as first responders and other public servants. These men and women have studied and trained for the service they offer, sacrifice every day because they care about our community as a whole and people as individuals, and place their own lives in jeopardy for the sake of our safety and good health. They have taken Peter’s words to Jesus and have spoken them to us. By their livelihood, they say to us, “We have given up everything” for you, to care for you, to protect you. They have made a total commitment, the type of commitment that Jesus praised. **[Would you help me thank them?]**

There are others in this church today who make a total commitment of inestimable value. We have parents who sacrifice to find employment, work hard, budget their expenses, and provide for their children. They discipline kids out of love, and they rearrange their entire lives around their children. When a couple welcomes a child into their home for the first time **[as Ryan and Jennifer do today]**, they are modeling the kind of discipleship that Peter summarized: “We have given up everything to follow you.”

If you wonder what drew people to Jesus, one answer is in the way he dealt with the rich young man in Mark’s gospel. It wasn’t just what Jesus said to the man, it was how he looked at him. After Jesus heard the man declare how closely he followed the laws, and before Jesus delivered his decisive statement about sacrifice, Mark says about the young man, “Jesus, looking at him, loved him.” Only then did he say, “Sell what you have and give to the poor.” He delivered his command in love.

Every one of us commits to something or someone. Life usually goes better when we do. But sometimes we commit to the wrong thing or the wrong person. We succumb to pleasures instead of true love. My brothers and sisters, God is always looking at you and loving you. God is always asking you to give up everything to follow him. When we uncover the attractions that keep us from God, we can rid them and follow Christ alone. Then we will have treasure in heaven.

*Sunday, October 10, 2021*