

12 – 6-28-20 13th Sunday

Jesus tell us in the gospel: *“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.”*

Jesus is not mincing any words here.

The Lord isn't saying that we are not to love parents or others. No, not at all. What Jesus is saying is that we are to love Him first and foremost. It is not a matter of convenience, it is a matter of the heart and that of a true Christian. If we are going to be Followers of Christ, HE must come first in our lives.

St. Benedict has had the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program for over 35 years. Little ones, as young as 3 years old, come and spend an hour or so pondering the Word of God. Remarkable things happen in the Atrium. One little boy just came home from his session in the Atrium and was having milk and cookies at the kitchen table, while Mom busied herself getting supper ready. Her little son reflectively asked her: “Mom, who do you love more, me or God?” The Mom quickly said: “You honey.” The boy responded: “That’s where you make your mistake, Mom. We gotta love God first.”

No one taught the boy that. It was an insight coming from his little heart. Jesus tells us to be His follower, to be a Christian, we must love Him above all else.

Now, how about “taking up your cross to follow Jesus.” Jesus, we know, carried His cross to Calvary and died on His cross for our salvation. The penalty of sin, death, died with Jesus on the cross! Jesus did the work for us on the cross. He took our pain and suffering on Him. He gave us the example and bore witness to His love.

Once a father was sitting in a doctor’s office with his young son. The nurse came in and needed to draw blood from the little boy. The boy cried: "Dad, I can't do it. I just can't do it." The nurse said, "Here's the deal, buddy. We've got this numbing spray. We'll spray the numbing spray on you, and then we'll stick the needle in you, and you won't even feel it." But the boy kept saying, "I can't do it. I can't do it."

The father said to the nurse: "Ma'am, I know what I'm about to ask you may be out of bounds, but can you stick me first? Can you do it without the numbing spray? I just need to show my son." She said, "Yes, I'll do it. We'll keep this between us." So the father put his son on his lap, and said, "Watch Daddy." The father stretched out his arm.

The nurse stuck the father and drew blood. A smile came over the boy’s face. The boy was still a little nervous, but when he saw that Daddy already went through what he was about to go through, with no numbing spray, he stuck his arm out. It gave him courage.

How can we take up our cross and follow Jesus, when our cross, too, may lead to our Calvary? Look at Jesus on the cross. They drew His blood first. He tells us “Watch Me.”