

Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time -C 2019
Wisdom 9.13-18///Phil. 9.10,12-17///Luke 14. 25-33.

→in the 32 years that I have been a priest, I have had opportunity to witness some pretty significant events in the lives of people,

→but perhaps most special has been....not only to watch my 3 brothers and one sister get married....but to be able to officiate at all of their weddings.....

→I am sure many of you have been involved in weddings....maybe you have been fortunate enough to witness your own child get married,

→certainly I am sure you have seen a close friend get married, and if you, yourself are married, I am sure you fondly remember your own wedding

→a wedding ceremony, [without a doubt] is a significant event

→because at every wedding...those participating in the wedding -- the bride and groom make a choice

→they make the choice to spend rest of lives together as husband and wife

→[and so] a wedding celebrates **the choice** made by two people to be together and with that choice sometimes comes a hefty price tag, because not only does the wedding itself cost a pretty penny but it also costs terms of the relationship

---//--the commitment made between a married couple costs something on the part of each person

→[and].....early on in life all of us learn that all relationships, whether it be husband and wife, or good friends or just acquaintancesall the relationships we are involved in carry with it price tag

→even the relationship we share with God...with the Church.....involves a price tag...a commitment, a pledge and a promise on our part

→you know one of the more powerful [and challenging] prayers of our church happens at the very beginning of the baptism ceremony when parents bring their newborn child forth

→in doing so, they establish a relationship between the child and Jesus and the Church...

→the parents promise the following.....

→“you have asked to have your child baptized, in doing so, YOU are accepting the responsibility of training your child in the practice of the faith....it will be YOUR duty to bring YOUR CHILD up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us...do YOU clearly understand what YOU are undertaking????

→and parents proudly say I DO...YES...I understand...YES this is MY PROMISE...and yet how well do we keep that promise....how committed do we remain to that promise....how well do we actually live that promise...

→people will come often to me requesting to get married, have a child baptized, receive First Communion.....but they don’t go to church...they haven’t been to church in a while...it is just not part of their relationship with Christ...even though a promise was made when they were baptized, embraced when they received their First Eucharist, and renewed upon receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation....

→so I will say to them...so how does it feel not to be Catholic anymore....and they will answer...“I’m Catholic...even though I don’t go to Church”

→[like saying I’m spiritual but not religious]

→so I will engage in a little game...and ask them...what makes a student a student?

Well they are a student because they go to school....what makes a person a basketball or baseball player....well because they play basketball or baseball....well then what makes a Catholic a Catholic....

→[you see]...we're not Catholic simply by saying we are...we become Catholic ...by making our relationship to Jesus...one that was established when we were baptized real and actual....by going to Church, practicing our faith, living out the gospel.

→i.o.w....it going to cost us something

PAUSE

→and in today's gospel J. is tells the crowds and you and me about...the cost of relationships and in particular the cost of a relationship with him

and he uses some very graphic examples to point this out

you must leave behind those you care about the most....you have to carry my cross....you must renounce all your possessions....

→and the point he makes is that following him....becoming a disciple....is not like joining a swim club or a bowling league or a football team or bridge club.

---it's not simply about tacking on another activity onto our already busy lives and agreeing to abide by a few rules and regulations

→.....[instead].....following Christ is a matter that constantly demands our attention.....making sure that our priorities and values match that of the gospel

→a relationship with Christ is about making choices that are in tune with that of the gospel and doing what is right and necessary

→and it's about freely giving of our time, our talents and our energy to further the mission of Jesus.

PAUSE

→today's gospel reading is about cost, the cost of relationships in our lives, and the cost of our relationship with Christ.

and the message before us is quite simple....there is a difference between saying I am a disciple of Christ and actually living and being one

→there's a difference between saying I belong to a religion or a church and actually being a part of it

→there is a difference in saying or praying a creed and accepting and embracing it

-----there is a difference in saying I am a Catholic and actually being one

and the examples could go on and on

→THE POINT IS THAT ---/-- being a disciple of Jesus is going to cost us

→just as being in any relationship with anyone brings with it a cost

→and what is so terribly sad these days is that there are too many people who unfortunately walk away from relationships when they discover what that cost is

----they walk away from marriages

----they walk away from friendships

-----they walk away from the Church

----- and, they walk away from Christ

PAUSE

→being in a relationship with Christ is the challenge of the gospel today

..... it comes with a cost

////////and Christ is tells us that the COST is not always going to be easy nor simple nor cheap

→it's not always going to be to our liking or desires, our wants or wishes

----and the ultimate costwill eventually be your life along with a lot more in the course of living on this earth

→and so.....in the end.... the only real question we need to ask ourselves is the same question Christ is asking in the gospel today

...do we want a relationship with God.....and if so

are we willing to pay, accept, live and embrace....the cost