

“Hands to the plow”



The call to discipleship is not old, it is as new as this day ... always inviting a response of faith and trust. Jesus seems to be saying that when we choose to become his followers, we must act immediately, we must choose to give up our own identity and, in some sense, even our own life ... because this is the only way we can really discover our true selves.

Jesus tells us right up front that there's no looking back. Jesus live it out in His own choices and actions. He put His will, His gifts, His very life at the service of His Father. He trusted the love and providence of His Father. Step by step, He began to experience how His Father's love turned evil into good, and dying into

living. Every time He put aside His own desires to serve others, He became more fully alive, more fully a part of everyone else.

It is this kind of unselfish love that propels people into lives of service and ministry, into marriage and family, into priesthood and religious life. It is this kind of commitment to the Lord that is put to the test by the trials of life - sickness, failure, natural disasters, the death of our loved ones. We get to understand what "dying to self" means when our patience is tried to the breaking point by a rebellious teenager, or an irresponsible spouse, or the death of a loved one. We are asked to give up our own lives in favor of a parent suffering with alzheimers, or a victim of AIDS, or someone close to us who is being destroyed by drugs or alcohol.

St. Paul tells us: "For freedom, Christ has set us free." Freedom from death and sin. Freedom to Love; freedom to live. What we know to be absolutely true is that our response to Jesus' invitation involves us for the long haul and it will require sacrifice. We also know that his call and our faithfulness to it, is totally liberating: it gives us vision; focuses our energies and opens us to give ourselves generously and freely to the kingdom which Christ came to proclaim.



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