

Homily by Fr.Robin CRM – 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Word of God today invites us to reflect on the cost and the beauty of Christian discipleship.

1st Reading- *Wisdom: our limited vision, God's guiding Spirit*

The Book of Wisdom begins with a humbling truth: *"Who can know God's counsel, or who can conceive what the Lord intends?"* (Wis 9:13). By ourselves, we struggle to see clearly. Human reasoning is fragile. But God sends His Spirit to guide us.

Pope Francis once said: *"Christian faith is not a light which scatters all our darkness, but a lamp which guides our steps in the night."* (Lumen Fidei, 57). We do not walk blindly. The Spirit illuminates our path, especially when the cost of discipleship feels heavy.

2nd Reading. *Philemon: the cost of love and reconciliation*

In the letter to Philemon, Paul writes with deep affection about Onesimus, a runaway slave who has become his brother in Christ. Paul pleads with Philemon to receive him *"no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother."* (Phlm 16).

This is radical. In a world built on power and division, Paul asks Philemon to see with new eyes. To follow Christ is to let go of the old ways of domination and to embrace reconciliation.

Pope Benedict XVI reflected: *"The new way of seeing others is born from faith in Christ... In Him, we are truly brothers and sisters."* (Deus Caritas Est, 18).

Discipleship always costs us something: our pride, our prejudices, our comfort zones.

3. *The Gospel: the cost of discipleship*

Then comes the Gospel. Jesus turns to the crowds and speaks stark words: *"Whoever does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."* (Lk 14:27). He calls us to calculate the cost, like a builder or a king preparing for battle.

Following Jesus is not half-hearted. It demands surrender, sacrifice, and fidelity. Pope St. John Paul II reminded us: *"The way Jesus shows us is not easy. Rather, it is demanding. Yet it is the way that leads to true freedom and happiness."* (World Youth Day, 2000).

Discipleship means placing Christ above all — above possessions, above even family ties, above our own plans. This is not a rejection of love, but a purification of love. Only by making Him first can every other relationship find its proper place.

4. *Living this today*

So, what does this mean for us today?

- It means asking the Holy Spirit to guide us when we cannot see clearly.
- It means treating one another not as competitors, strangers, or even enemies, but as brothers and sisters in Christ.
- And it means embracing the crosses of daily life with trust, knowing that Christ walks with us.

Pope Francis put it meaningfully: *"To follow Jesus means to share His love for every human being, to carry the cross of our brothers and sisters, and to build with Him a world of justice and peace."*

Conclusion

Dear friends, today's readings remind us that discipleship is costly — but it is also life-giving. To follow Christ is to carry the cross, but also to walk in His light. To surrender our lives, but also to gain the joy that no one can take away.

Let us pray for the grace to be true disciples: guided by the Spirit, reconciled in love, and faithful in carrying the cross. And may the words of Pope St. Paul VI encourage us: *"The Christian is not spared trials, but in the Cross he finds strength and in the Resurrection he finds hope."*

Amen.