



**Five Important Spiritual Thoughts from the Liturgy of the Word  
...and follow up for the Secular Franciscan  
August 31 – September 7**

**1 -- "Do not be afraid." (Lk 5:10)\*\***

As I go about my life, have I truly placed my trust in the Lord?

**2 – "In every age, O Lord, you have been our refuge." (Psalm 90:1)  
...As I study my life so far, in what areas should I have listened more  
to the Gospels.**

**3 – "Be my disciple." (Lk 14:33)\*\***

Extended meditation:

(adapted from Fr. Mike's [Seed Sown](#), volume C)

**DISCIPLES OR ADMIRERS**

Jesus tells two short stories to get a point across to the crowd around him and it is the same point for us today. That point—you must have some idea of a project before you do it. If you want to build a tower, you must plan on having enough material to finish it. If one king is marching against another, the king must know what to expect before he starts something. It is a characteristic essential to any leadership situation—having an idea of what will happen as a result of your decision. The same applies to being a disciple of Jesus. If we say that we will be disciples, we must know what it means.

One of the more interesting and more challenging American religious people in the past is a man by the name of Clarence Jordan. He was a Protestant peace activist of the 1940's and 50's who founded a place of refuge for persecuted black people in Georgia called the Koinonia Farm. It is an interesting thought that he could have been a good Franciscan.

In the early fifties, Clarence approached his brother Robert Jordan, later a state senator and justice of the Georgia Supreme Court, asking him to represent Koinonia Farm legally. Bob reminded Clarence that he had political aspirations, and therefore could not do what he asked because he would never be elected, saying that he could lose everything that he had worked for. Clarence pointed out that Koinonia Farm could lose everything also. Bob told him that it was different. "Why is it different," Clarence said, "I remember, it seems to me, that you and I joined the church the same Sunday, as boys. I expect when we came forward, the preacher asked me about the same question he did you. He asked me, 'Do you accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.' And I said, 'yes.' What did you say?" Bob replied, "I follow Jesus, Clarence, up to a point." Clarence said: "Could that point by any chance be—

## SHAPING THE FRANCISCAN FOOTPRINT

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the cross?" Bob said: "That's right. I follow him to that cross, but not *on* the cross. I'm not getting myself crucified."

Clarence replied: "Then, Bob, I don't believe you're a disciple. You're an *admirer* of Jesus, but not a *disciple* of his. I think you ought to go back to the church you belong to, and tell them you're an admirer not a disciple." Bob's answer to his statement—the lawyer getting the last word—was that then there would be no church at all because every Christian was an admirer and not a disciple.

To me, that is a classic distinction: the difference between a disciple and an admirer. Jesus says that you had better know what it means to be a disciple before you admit to being one, and he spells out what it means to be a disciple in the Gospel.

It means renouncing self and material possessions:

*If anyone comes to me without hating [his/her family], and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple.*

It is exaggeration, something that Jesus often uses in his sermons, saying that we have to know what is really important in life. He says that family and material things cannot be more important than God. In this matter, are we disciples or merely admirers of Jesus?

Being a disciple/follower means taking up the cross:

*Whoever does not carry his own cross ... cannot be my disciple.*

In this life things are going to happen which are painful—the cross—life will be unfair, there will be tragedies, suffering, disagreements, family problems, bad along with all the good. And the only way we can understand it is to say that God is in charge, and when God is in charge, only good can come out of any situation no matter what is happening. So as we look at the way we have behaved, we must ask ourselves: are we disciples or merely admirers of Jesus?

Being a disciple/follower means truly following Jesus, that is, knowing what Jesus wants:

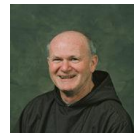
*Whoever does not...come after me cannot be my disciple.*

It means knowing what his principles and ideals are and exactly what they mean in our daily lives. So we must ask ourselves as we look at our Christianity: are we disciples or merely admirers?

We do not need more admirers of Jesus; we need more disciples. In fact, if we are only admirers, then we really do not have a church—Bob Jordan was right. A disciple gives up self, accepts the cross, and truly knows what Jesus wants.

Every Franciscan is automatically an admirer of Jesus. But they should also be a follower. Like Clarence and Bob Jordan, we have gone before a preacher and said that we will live a way of life that is so different that it will make us automatically a follower of Jesus.

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**4 -- Jesus departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. (Lk 6:12-13)\*\***

...A Franciscan, according to my Constitutions, should spend significant time to prayer.

**5 -- “Blessed are you who are poor.” (Lk 6:20)\*\***

...The Franciscan should be aware that Luke’s first Beatitude is stronger than Matthew’s. Jesus was speaking of the physically poor, and it is another reminder of the importance of control of material things.

\*\* denotes one of the more important quotes in the Gospel