

# THE CATHOLIC ESSENTIALS

Summer Sermon Series 2015

Week 5: The Essential Commitment: Intentional Discipleship

## I. SACRED SCRIPTURE

**[Following Jesus is an Intentional Choice]** Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,<sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.”<sup>16</sup> And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen.<sup>17</sup> **And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men.”**<sup>18</sup> **And immediately they left their nets and followed him.**<sup>19</sup> And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.<sup>20</sup> **And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him.**

Mark 1:14b-20

**[A Divine Encounter changes everything]**<sup>27</sup> After this he went out, and saw a tax collector, named Levi, sitting at the tax office; **and he said to him, “Follow me.”**<sup>28</sup> **And he left everything, and rose and followed him.**

Luke 5:27-28

**[Jesus brings us light]**<sup>12</sup> Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, **“I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

John 8:12

**[Baptism is the Sacrament of Discipleship]**<sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?<sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Romans 6:3-4

**[We are Called, Redeemed, and given an example to Follow]**<sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.<sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and

live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.<sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.

1 Peter 2:21,24-25.

## II. FATHERS OF THE CHURCH

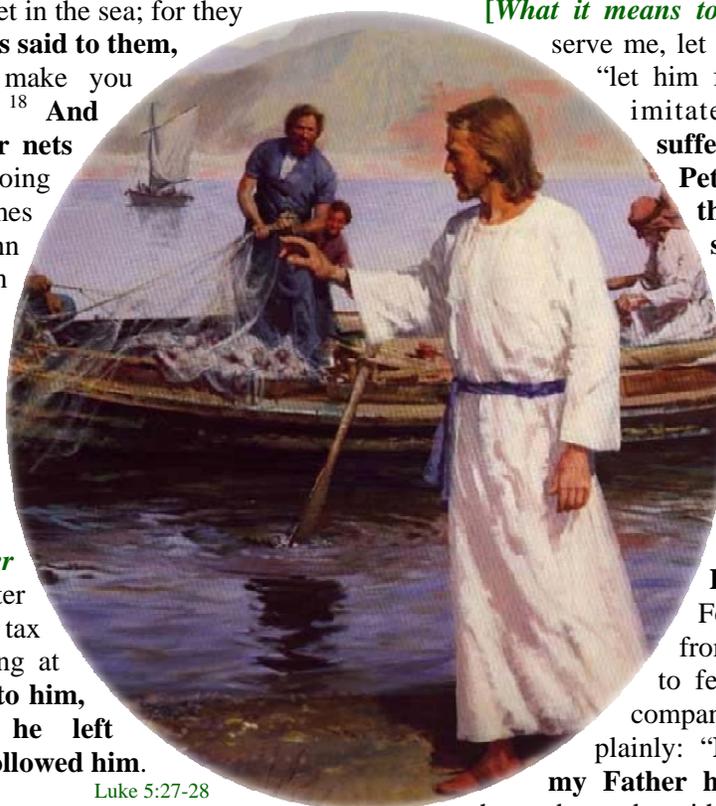
**[What it means to follow Him?]** “If any man serve me, let him follow me.” What is that, “let him follow me,” but just, let him imitate me? **“Because Christ suffered for us,”** says the Apostle Peter, **“leaving us an example that we should follow His steps.”** Here you have the meaning of the words, “If any man serve me, let him follow me.” But with what result? what wages? what reward? **“And where I am,”** He says, **“there shall also my servant be.”** Let Him be freely loved, that so the reward of the service done Him may be to be with Him. For where will one be well apart from Him, or when will one come to feel himself in an evil case in company with Him? Hear it still more plainly: **“If any man serve me, him will my Father honor.”** And what will be the

honor but to be with His Son? For of what He said before, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be,” we may understand Him as giving the explanation, when He says here, “him will my Father honor.” **For what greater honor can await an adopted son than to be with the Only-begotten; not, indeed, as raised to the level of His Godhead, but made a partaker of His eternity?**

St. Augustine of Hippo, *Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John*, 51.11

## III. CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

**2232** Family ties are important but not absolute. Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts itself



more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. **They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to follow Jesus:** “He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd Ed.).*

**2466** In Jesus Christ, the whole of God’s truth has been made manifest. “Full of grace and truth,” he came as the “light of the world,” he *is the Truth*. “Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.” **The disciple of Jesus continues in his word so as to know “the truth [that] will make you free” and that sanctifies. To follow Jesus is to live in “the Spirit of truth,” whom the Father sends in his name and who leads “into all the truth.” To his disciples Jesus teaches the unconditional love of truth: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes or No.’ ”**

*Catechism of the Catholic Church (2nd Ed.).*

#### IV. PAPAL TEACHING

Faith does not simply provide information about Who Christ is; rather, it **entails a personal relationship with Christ, a surrender of our whole person with all our understanding, will and feelings, to God's self-revelation.**

*Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, World Youth Day Mass, August 21, 2011.*

. . . as the Successor of Peter, let me urge you to strengthen this faith which has been handed down to us from the time of the Apostles. **Make Christ, the Son of God, the centre of your life.** But let me also remind you that following Jesus in faith means walking at his side in the communion of the Church. **We cannot follow Jesus on our own.** Anyone who would be tempted to do so “on his own”, or to approach the life of faith with that kind of

individualism so prevalent today, will risk never truly encountering Jesus, or will end up following a counterfeit Jesus.

*Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, World Youth Day Mass, August 21, 2011.*

**I ask you, dear friends, to love the Church which brought you to birth in the faith, which helped you to grow in the knowledge of Christ and which led you to discover the beauty of his love. Growing in friendship with Christ necessarily means recognizing the importance of joyful participation in the life of your parishes, communities and movements, as well as the celebration of Sunday Mass, frequent reception of the sacrament of Reconciliation, and the cultivation of personal prayer and meditation on God’s word.**

*Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, World Youth Day Mass, August 21, 2011.*

Say to [Jesus]: "Jesus, I know that You are the Son of God, Who have given Your life for me. I want to follow You faithfully and to be led by Your word. You know me and You love me. I place my trust in You and I put my whole life into Your hands. I want You to be the power that strengthens me and the joy which never leaves me."

*Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, World Youth Day Mass, August 21, 2011.*

**3. I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord”. The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms.**

*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium*

