

Link to Liturgy



13th Sunday in Ordinary Time The Evangelical Counsels

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Lessons and Discussions

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“follow me”

Page 7 – Evangelical Counsels: Life of Christ
“follow me”

Page 11 – Following Jesus: What to expect
“I will follow you wherever you go”

Entrance Antiphon

This should be chanted so that the time of prayer, study and discussion can be made sacred.

Omnes gentes *Ps 47 (46): 2*

VI



ALL nations, clap your hands; shout unto God with
a voice of joy.

Alternate options:

Be Thou My Vision
O God, Our Help in Ages Past
Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven
Cool or Holy (Remnant)

Collect – Roman Missal

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

O God, who through the grace of adoption chose us to be children of light, grant, we pray that we may not be wrapped in the darkness of error but always be seen to stand in the bright light of truth. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Gospel Reading – Luke 9:51-62 – Roman Missal

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
- Glory to you O Lord

When the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him. On the way they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his reception there, but they

“The End” Notes

- [1] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [2] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*, Vol. III
- [3] Ibid
- [4] Vatican II, *Constitution on the Church*, 42
- [5] Blessed John Paul II; *Contenance for the Kingdom*; General Audience of April 21, 1982
- [6] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [7] Ibid.
- [8] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 544
- [9] Blessed John Paul II; *Contenance for the Kingdom*; General Audience of April 21, 1982
- [10] Catechism of the Catholic Church - 918
- [11] Catechism of the Catholic Church Glossary
- [12] Ibid
- [13] Ibid
- [14] Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., *Modern Catholic Dictionary*
- [15] 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- [16] Pope Paul VI; Office of Readings; 13 Sunday in Ordinary Time
- [17] Saint Anthony of Padua
- [18] 1 John 2:16
- [19] Matthew 6:24-34
- [20] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*, Vol. III
- [21] Cardinal Roncalli, Venice, Mar.3, 1957
- [22] Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.; *Divine Intimacy*, Vol. III
- [23] Introduction of the Nine Day Novena to Blessed Junipero Serra - <http://www.serraus.org/resources>
- [24] Pope Francis; May 16, 2013
- [25] Ibid

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us; and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the cooperation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

would not welcome him because the destination of his journey was Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them?” Jesus turned and rebuked them, and they journeyed to another village.

As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus answered him, “Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head.”

And to another he said, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, let me go first and bury my father.” But he answered him, “Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” And another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home.” To him Jesus said, “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

- Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Spiritual Reading – Office of Readings – 13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

From a homily by Venerable Paul VI, pope

We proclaim Christ to the whole world

Not to preach the Gospel would be my undoing, for Christ himself sent me as his apostle and witness. The more remote, the more difficult the assignment, the more my love of God spurs me on. I am bound to proclaim that Jesus is Christ, the Son of the living God. Because of him we come to know the God we cannot see. He is the firstborn of all creation; in him all things find their being. Man’s teacher and redeemer, he was born for us, died for us, and for us he rose from the dead.

All things, all history converges in Christ. A man of sorrow and hope, he knows us and loves us. As our friend he stays by us throughout our lives; at the end of time he will come to be our judge; but we also know that he will be the complete fulfillment of our lives and our great happiness for all eternity.

I can never cease to speak of Christ for he is our truth and our light; he is the way, the truth and the life. He is our bread, our

source of living water who allays our hunger and satisfies our thirst. He is our shepherd, our leader, our ideal, our comforter and our brother.

He is like us but more perfectly human, simple, poor, humble, and yet, while burdened with work, he is more patient. He spoke on our behalf; he worked miracles; and he founded a new kingdom: in it the poor are happy; peace is the foundation of a life in common; where the pure of heart and those who mourn are uplifted and comforted; the hungry find justice; sinners are forgiven; and all discover that they are brothers.

The image I present to you is the image of Jesus Christ. As Christians you share his name; he has already made most of you his own. So once again I repeat his name to you Christians and I proclaim to all men: Jesus Christ is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, Lord of the new universe, the great hidden key to human history and the part we play in it. He is the mediator—the bridge, if you will—between heaven and earth. Above all he is the Son of man, more perfect than any man, being also the Son of God, eternal and infinite. He is the son of Mary his mother on earth, more blessed than any woman. She is also our mother in the spiritual communion of the mystical body.

Remember: [it] is Jesus Christ I preach day in and day out. His name I would see echo and re-echo for all time even to the ends of the earth.

Responsory – Office of Readings

2 Timothy 1:10; John 1:16; Colossians 1:16-17

Our Savior Jesus Christ has destroyed death,
and through the Gospel he has proclaimed life and immortality.
– And of his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

All things were created through him and for him;
he was before all that is,
and all things are held in being in him.
– And of his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Your judgment; that I may escape hell and in the end obtain heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

Marian Antiphon – Salve Regina – Simple Tone

IV. ANTIPHON SALVE REGINA, SIMPLE TONE
From First Vespers of the Feast of the Blessed Trinity to None on Saturday
before the First Sunday of Advent.

Ant.
5.
S

Alve, Re-gi-na, * ma-ter mi-se-ri-córdi-æ : Vi- ta, dulcé-do, et spes nostra,
salve. Ad te clamámus, éxsu-les, fi-li-i Hevæ Ad te suspi-rámus,
gemén-tes et flentes in hac lacrimá-rum valle. E-ia ergo, Advocá-ta
nostra, il-los tu-os mi-se-ri-córdes ócu-los ad nos convér-te. Et Je-sum,
bene-díctum fructum ventris tu-i, nobis post hoc exsí-li-um osténde.
O clemens : O pi-a : O dulcis * Virgo Ma-rí-a.

V. Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

R. Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi

Let us pray. O almighty and everlasting God, who, by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become the worthy habitation of Thy Son: grant that we may be delivered from present evils, and from everlasting death, by her gracious intercession, in whose commemoration we rejoice. Through the same Christ our Lord, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God, world without end. Amen.

English Translation

to defend me by Your power.

To You I desire to consecrate all my thoughts, words, deeds, and suffering, that henceforth I may think of you, speak of you, refer all my actions to You greater glory, and suffer willingly whatever You shall appoint. Lord, I desire that in all things Your Will be done, because it is Your Will, and I desire that all things be done in the manner that You will them.

Grant that I may always esteem whatsoever is pleasing to You, despise what You abhor, avoid what You forbid, and do what you command.

I beg You to enlighten my understanding, to inflame my will, to purify my body, and to sanctify my soul.
My God, give me strength to atone for my sins, to overcome my temptations, to subdue my passions, and to acquire the virtues proper to my state of life.

Fill my heart with tender affection for Your goodness, hatred of my faults, love of my neighbor, and contempt of the world. May Your grace help me to be obedient to my superiors, kind and courteous to my inferiors, faithful to my friends, and charitable to my enemies.

Assist me to overcome sensuality by self-sacrifice, avarice by almsdeeds, anger by meekness, and carelessness by devotion. My God, make me prudent in my undertakings, courageous in danger, patient in trials, and humble in success.

Grant that I may be ever attentive at my prayers, temperate at my meals, diligent in my work, and faithful in my good resolutions.

Let my conscience be ever upright and pure, my behavior modest, my conversation kind, and my actions edifying.

Assist me that I may continually strive to overcome the evil inclinations of my nature, to cooperate with Your grace, to keep Your commandments, and to work out my salvation.

My God, make me realize the nothingness of this world, the greatness of heaven, the shortness of time, and the length of eternity. Grant that I may prepare for death; that I may fear

Evangelical Counsels: A Summary – Lesson and Discussion *“Follow me”*

The Evangelical Counsels Poverty – “A Christian counsel by which a person voluntarily renounces all or part of his right to the ownership of material things.”[1]

“The requirements of God’s service form the connecting thread of the reflections to which today’s readings give rise. During the mysterious manifestations of God on Mount Horeb, Elijah received a command from God to consecrate Elisha as a prophet. As he came down from the mountain he met Elisha plowing his field; Elijah ‘passed by him and cast his mantle upon him’ (1 Kgs 19:19); it was symbolic gesture which indicated the prophetic mission with which he was being invested. Elisha’s response was immediate; he abandoned his oxen – ‘twelve yoke,’ states the sacred text succinctly, for he was rich – and ran after Elijah, asking but one thing: ‘Let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you’ (ib. 20). It is a very human and moving detail which shows that the divine call does not make one insensitive to family affections, although it may demand their sacrifice, when necessary, in order to dedicate ourselves completely to the service of God and neighbor. God has the right to ask us to leave everything – profession, property, home, and family – in order to follow his call.”[2]

The Evangelical Counsel Celibacy – “Ecclesiastical celibacy was a logical development of Christ’s teaching about continence (Matthew 19:10-12). The first beginnings of religious life were seen in the self-imposed practice of celibacy among men and woman who wished to devote themselves to a lifetime of following Christ in the practice of the evangelical counsels. Celibacy was one of the features of the earliest hermits and a requirement of the first monastic foundation under St. Pachomius (c.290-346). Over the centuries religious celibacy has been the subject of the Church’s frequent legislation. The Second Vatican Council named chastity first among the evangelical counsels to be practiced by religious and said that ‘it is a special symbol of heavenly benefits, and for religious it is a most effective means of dedicating themselves wholeheartedly to the divine service and the works of the apostolate.’”[3]

Celibacy “is that precious gift of divine grace given to some by the Father to devote themselves to God alone more easily with an undivided heart in virginity or celibacy. This perfect conti-

nence for love of the kingdom of heaven has always been held in high esteem by the Church as a sign and stimulus of love, and as a singular source of spiritual fertility in the world.”[4]

Because it is a counsel of the Church and not a precept, continence or celibacy for the Kingdom of God is a choice and Blessed John Paul II says that the choice must be made out of “value” for the virtue. For example if a person choose either celibacy or marriage it must be done because the vocation corresponds to the plan of God, not out of some romanticism of what celibacy or marriage is. Celibacy and marriage after all are a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. “If someone chooses marriage, he must choose it exactly as it was instituted by the Creator ‘from the beginning’; he must seek in it those values that correspond to the plan of God; if on the other hand someone decides to follow continence for the kingdom of heaven, he must seek in it the values proper to such a vocation. In other words, *he must act in conformity with his chosen vocation.*”[5]

The Evangelical Counsel of Obedience – “The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. Material obedience is merely to carry out the physical action commanded; formal obedience is to perform an action precisely because it is commanded by a legitimate superior.”[6] In regards to religious it is “the voluntary submission of oneself to obey legitimate ecclesiastical authority beyond the demands of obedience prescribed on all the faithful. It is the free surrender of one’s autonomy, according to the Church’s directives, in order to better imitate Christ, and to cooperate with him in his work of redemption, who became obedient unto death, even to death on the Cross. This obedience of counsel may be given stability by a vow of obedience made to a superior in an institute of perfection or to one’s confessor or spiritual director.”[7]

“The kingdom belongs *to the poor and lowly*, which means those who have accepted it with humble hearts. Jesus is sent to ‘preach good news to the poor’; he declares them blessed, for “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” To them—the “little ones” — the Father is pleased to reveal what remains hidden from the wise and the learned. Jesus shares the life of the poor, from the cradle to the cross; he experiences hunger, thirst, and privation. Jesus identifies himself with the poor of every kind and makes active love toward them the condition for entering his kingdom.”[8]

from moving forward. What are the “cozy structures” the “comfort zones” in our life? This comfort keeps us from apostolic zeal. Pope Francis uses the example of Saint Paul who in his apostolic zeal shunned a life of comfort in favor of the Life of Christ, the Life of the Gospel.

“Paul is a nuisance: he is a man who, with his preaching, his work, his attitude irritates others, because testifying to Jesus Christ and the proclamation of Jesus Christ makes us uncomfortable, it threatens our comfort zones – even Christian comfort zones, right? It irritates us. The Lord always wants us to move forward, forward, forward ... not to take refuge in a quiet life or in cozy structures, no?... And Paul, in preaching of the Lord, was a nuisance. But he had deep within him that most Christian of attitudes: Apostolic zeal. He had its apostolic zeal. He was not a man of compromise. No! The truth: forward! The proclamation of Jesus Christ, forward!”[24]

Today’s Gospel is a comfort check for the Christian, it gives us the opportunity to “meditate upon the strong words of the gospel in order to react against a concept of Christianity that is mediocre, easy, lazy, reduced to the measure of our own convenience and interests.”[25]

Profession of Faith or Popular Devotion – Universal Prayer

This Universal Prayer has been attributed to Pope Clement XI from the 18th century. This prayer provides a good outline of what we need to do we strive for sanctity and Eternal Life, as “citizens-in-training” for Heaven!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

My God, I believe in You; strengthen my faith. All my hopes are in You; secure them. I love You; teach me to love you daily more and more. I am sorry that I have offended You; increase my sorrow.

I adore you as the Author of my first beginning. I aspire after you as my last end. I give you thanks as my constant Benefactor, I call upon you as my sovereign Protector.

My God, be pleased to conduct me by your wisdom; to restrain me by the thought of Your justice; to comfort me by Your mercy;

“We give up our country and our family, without losing love for our country and our family, but this undoubtedly raises this love to a higher and broader significance...Woe to us if we should even now be thinking of a comfortable home...of a pattern of life which brings us glory or honor or worldly satisfaction!”[21]

Third, the Christian can never look back, to stall for even the slightest thing is to delay in the proclamation of the Kingdom. We must have right away obedience in all things. The third person in the Gospel was asking Jesus for a delay in following him, in favor of his family. “Jesus did not hesitate to declare that there must be not time wasted in following his call. There are cases in which a delay or a return to one’s previous ways could jeopardize everything...”[22]

Blessed Junipero Serra is an perfect example of this Gospel and took for His motto, “Always go forward – never turn back!” “At his beatification on September 25, 1988, Fray Junipero Serra, O.F.M., S.T.D. (1713-1784), was declared by His Holiness Pope John Paul II to be a ‘shining example of Christian Virtue and the Missionary Spirit.’ The new Blessed is truly an international luminary. He distinguished himself as an exemplary Franciscan priest, respected in academic circles, and acclaimed in the pulpit by the age of thirty-five. During the next two decades, he labored as an apostolic missionary throughout central Mexico, notably in the Sierra Gorda among the Pame Indians. During the final fifteen years of his life, he emerged as a pioneer and the Apostle of California. Dramatically he demonstrated the natural and supernatural branch of his missionary motto: ‘Always go forward - never turn back!’”[23]

Each Saint has this apostolic zeal of forwarding the Gospel, this is why in the entrance antiphon we pray, “All nations clap your hands, shout out to God with a voice of joy.” The nations that were exposed to the Gospel because of the tireless work of the apostles could clap their hands and shout to God with a voice of joy. Mexico and in fact the coast of California can clap it’s hands and shout to God with a voice of joy because of the tireless work of Blessed Junipero Serra. To bring the Gospel to these lands was not a comfortable task for the apostles, nor was it comfortable for modern Saints such as Blessed Junipero Serra, but the faith is not about comfort it is about joy.

Pope Francis warns us about the “cozy structures” that keep us

How does the act of renouncing or “giving up” something actually help us to gain something? “It is a characteristic feature of the human heart to accept even difficult demands in the name of love, for an ideal, and above all in the name of love for a person (love is, in fact, oriented by its very nature toward the person).”[9] We give up “things” for the sake of love and not love itself but love of a person. In the case of the Blessed Trinity, we are willing to renounce something or someone, out of love for the three persons in one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We are willing to accept difficult demands (renunciation) in the name of love (the virtue) for a person. The difficult demands and the virtue itself do not take precedence over the person.

What do we gain if we are called to renounce material possessions (poverty), marriage and family (chastity), and our own will (obedience)? No matter if the renunciation is large or small, strict or loose, what is gained in any renunciation is a deeper love for the person for whom the renunciation is made. For example if a husband renounces a material possession for the good of his family, he grows in deeper love with his wife and children. If a monk renounces his own will for the good of the abbot or monastery, he grows in deeper love for his superior and his community. If our focus is isolated on either the act of renunciation and not the person, we become self-centered and hold grudges. For example, if the husband who renounced a material possession continues to remind his children and wife that “he gave up” this or that for them, this is not a truly “giving up” for in fact he is “holding on” to the action to use as a tool to get something he wants. This “holding on” can lead to a grudge or the attitude that we gave something up now it is the other persons turn to give something up. This is not how Christ renounces. When Christ gives us His life, it is a renunciation, our of love, for the person, in the case of the Crucifixion for every person. This love does not have strings attached, but is freely given and because it is freely given begs a response also freely given.

Evangelical Counsels: The Life of Christ – Lesson and Discussion

“Follow me”

“From the very beginning of the Church there were men and women who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty, and to imitate him more closely, by practicing the evangelical counsels. They led lives dedicated to God, each in his own way. Many of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became hermits

or founded religious families. These the Church, by virtue of her authority, gladly accepted and approved.”[10]

What are the Evangelical Counsels? The vows are poverty (a detachment from worldly things[11]), obedience (submission to the authority of God[12]) and chastity (temperance which leads to the unity of the body and soul[13]). A Franciscan friar once said for younger children to understand it “no bling bling [poverty], no sweet thing [chastity], and Christ is our King [obedience]”

The Evangelical Counsels should not be confused with an Ecumenical Council, which is a universal gathering of bishops from around the world to discuss matters in the Church.

What does “evangelical” and “counsel” mean in the context of evangelical counsels? The word evangelical derives from both Greek and Latin and means “good news” or Gospel. The root or source of the evangelical counsels is the Gospel - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Counsels are “good actions that are not prescribed by any law. They are morally better than the corresponding precepts, as fasting is higher than temperance. Among the counsels the most important are the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They are called evangelical because they were taught and practiced by Christ in the Gospels. Moreover, they are especially proposed by the Church as means for attaining Christian perfection. A person can freely bind oneself to practice the evangelical counsels, as in the religious life, and then they become obligatory according to the conditions of the vows or promises assumed.”[14]

What is the difference between a counsel of the Church and a precept of the Church? In a precept, a rule must be followed and the faithful are bound to the rule; in a counsel the rule is not obligatory, but up to the individual. To assist at Mass each Sunday and on Holy Days; is not a counsel, but rather a precept. Poverty for example, is a counsel, the faithful do not have to take a vow of poverty, and rather it is left to each individual to choose. The goal of Christ and His Church is the perfection of the Christian. This is why the Church prays each Thursday night at Night Prayer, “May the God of peace make you perfect in holiness. May he preserve you whole and entire, spirit, soul, and body, irreproachable at the coming of our Lord Jesus

shunned by their spouse.

What are some examples of a call to the greater good? There are many that give up the good of family to serve the good of country. There are others that may give up the good of a prosperous job opportunity for the good of family. There is always the opportunity to say “no” to an earthly pleasure, and “yes” to spiritual pleasures such as virtue. When we fast, we are saying “no” to an earthly pleasure, and “yes” to the virtue. We may give up the good of food and drink for our self in order to give it to another, the virtue of charity or hospitality. If we are able to say “no” to small things throughout the day, for example, an extra serving of desert, one more television show, an extra hour of sleep, we begin to learn to say “no” to greater things, for example the temptation to sin. We say “no” now, so that we can say “no” to something greater later.

What are some other examples of saying “no” to something earthly, so that we may say “yes” to something heavenly?

VIDEO – Attraction (Shadow Theatre Group) 1st Audition Britain's Got Talent – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 6:47
<http://youtu.be/CvQBUccxBr4>

This performance shows the sacrifices of life, the giving up of one good for another.

As Christians we are always called to avoid evil and pursue good, the challenge of the Christian comes in when we must choose between two or more “good” things. In this case we must discern what is the greater good, what is God’s will, and then we must do the good without hesitation.

Monks and nuns live a strict life of obedience. When the bell rings for Liturgy of the Hours or Mass, the monks and nuns must report immediately, without delay, to the chapel for prayer. There is a story of Saint Teresa of Avila, in which she was writing a letter. She was done with the letter and signing her name at the bottom. When she was on the last letter of her name, the chapel bell rang. She heard the bell, stopped what she was doing, put the pen down, and left for the chapel. On her paper she signed her name “Teres_”. The counsel of obedience, and obedience without hesitation was important that finishing the job that she was doing.

Jesus replies, “Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.”

The third person says, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home.”

To him Jesus said, “No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God.”

What then are the conditions for discipleship, to follow Jesus?

First, we cannot expect by following Jesus any security or advantage from a worldly standpoint. For example we cannot buy into “prosperity theology”. This false teaching is sometimes referred to as the gospel of success, prosperity gospel or the health and wealth gospel. It teaches that financial blessing is the will of God for Christians, and that by following Jesus, God will increase one's material wealth. We might be blessed with worldly advantages, we might not, what is clear is that worldly security and advantages are not promised to the Christian.

Where do we see prosperity theology in our culture? There are many pastors, televangelists, and even Christian organizations that promise God's blessing if you donate to them or join them. Many times there is the false believe that if we are poor, in despair, or misfortune has occurred in our life, this must mean that we have done something wrong and that God is displeased with us. If we were to use external, worldly advantages to gauge our relationship with God, then we would say that Jesus was not close to God, for Jesus was poor and many misfortunes occurred in His life especially at the end of His life. He was a man of no worldly advantage or status.

Second, the Christian is called to a greater good. Yes, it is good to take care of family and friends to “bury my father” but there is a greater good, that of going out and proclaiming the kingdom of God. Those who enter the religious life or priesthood give up family and even sometimes the care of family in order to solely focus on proclaiming the kingdom of God. Lay people also must remember that although family is a good, God is always the greater good and there are times in which a person will be asked to choose between the good of family and the good of God. Many people who enter the Church are disowned by family members. Many spouses who choose to go to Mass and pray regularly are

Christ.”[15] In the precepts and counsels of the Church are means of Christian perfection, the precepts are obligatory, the counsels are to be lived out in a manner in which the individual chooses. As the Catechism states in section 918, many of the faithful have chosen to imitate Jesus more closely and to follow Him with greater liberty by embracing and in fact binding themselves to the counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

In regards to precepts of the Church, the Church binds the faithful to the precept. In regards to the counsels of the Church, the individual binds himself to the counsel. For example both a monk and a lay person are bond by the Church to the precept of assist at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass; this is the same precept for both. Both the monk and layman are called to obedience, but they will bind themselves to different ways of living this counsel out, the monk in a strict sense to that of his superior, the lay person in a loose sense to temporal bosses, family, etc.

Venerable Pope Paul VI says that the evangelical counsels are a means in which the Christian can echo and re-echo the Life of Christ. “Remember: [it] is Jesus Christ I preach day in and day out. His name I would see echo and re-echo for all time even to the ends of the earth.”[16] When the world sees the Christian imitating the poverty, chastity, and obedience of Jesus, they see Jesus. The Christian who lives the counsels either as a counsel or as a precept choose to preach Christ. “Actions speak louder than words; let your words teach and your actions speak.”[17] The evangelical counsels are the actions of Christ perpetuated in various ways through the life of His faithful followers.

Why would anyone wish to live a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience? Each of these counsels will be discussed further, but the simple answer is that Jesus Christ Himself chose and lived a life of poverty, chastity, and obedience. A Christian is an imitator of Christ, the Christian bears witness to Christ, and therefore the Christian must be ready to practice the evangelical counsels in their life, even if these counsels are not strictly observed as a rule or vow. For example a Christian may not choose to take a vow of celibacy, but all Christians no matter what their state in life are called to practice the virtue of chastity. A Christian may not choose to give up all their possessions and own nothing, but all Christians are called to have a healthy detachment from the goods of this world and never place “goods” before God. A Christian may not choose to bind themselves in strict obedience to a superior or spiritual director, but all Christians

are to obey the will of God, placing His will prior to all other human will including their own will. As baptized and confirmed Christians we are the Church Militant. As long as we are living on this earth we are battling what we call concupiscence, our tendency to sin.

What are main areas of concupiscence? Saint John narrows concupiscence down to three main areas of the flesh (what we do), the eyes (what we want or desire), and the pride of life (our will over God's will). "For all that is in the world, sensual lust, enticement for the eyes, and a pretentious life, is not from the Father but is from the world." [18] Jesus tells us to "look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them." [19] Our heavenly Father knows our needs. Do we trust our Father? When we fall into the concupiscence of flesh, eyes and pride of life, we are accepting things that are not from our heavenly Father but rather from the world. These offerings of the world are the very "false promises" that we rejected at our baptism which claimed us as a child of the Father.

How can we battle the threefold concupiscence (flesh, eyes and pride of life)? The Church has given to us the weapon of the evangelical counsels to counter this threefold concupiscence. The evangelical counsels are the also called vows. These are taken by religious, but should be practiced by all Christians because they were lived by Jesus. The flesh or sensual lust is conquered through the virtue of chastity. The eyes of pride is conquered through the virtue of poverty. The pretentious or prideful life is conquered through the virtue of obedience. It would seem that a person that gives up self, pleasure, goods, would not be happy, but in fact the opposite occurs. Those who live the evangelical counsels experience great joy, for in giving up our self, we discover our true self in Christ, in giving up worldly pleasures, we experience the beatitudes, and in giving up worldly goods we begin to understand the source of all goodness, God Himself. For this reason the Christian can live out the words of the entrance antiphon, "All nations, clap your hands, shout unto God with a voice of joy."

[See also Video Lesson - Temptation of Christ]

Where is the best example we can see the evangelical counsels? We best see the example of the evangelical counsels when we gaze at the crucifix. When we meditate on the hands of

Christ, they are open and full of nothing; this shows us that Christ was detached from worldly goods and possessions. When we meditate on the feet of Christ, they are nailed down, they do not walk wherever they wish, but rather the feet of Christ walk the path of God, as Jesus submits and is completely obedient to the will of the Father. When we meditate on the side of Jesus opened by the soldiers lance we see both blood and water poured out for us from the Sacred Heart. Jesus practices perfect chastity, giving the gift of Himself, pure in heart, to God and to all.

VIDEO – Olympic Speed Skater to Franciscan Sister? – POP CULTURE CONNECTION – 6:38

<http://youtu.be/oXU90OtQVjw>

Three sisters share the joy that is made possible by living out the evangelical counsels.

[See also Link to Liturgy Lesson - The Attractiveness of Earthly Goods]

Following Jesus: What to expect – Lesson and Discussion

"I will follow you wherever you go"

As Jesus leaves the Transfiguration and travels with His apostles to Jerusalem, where He would suffer and die, three people, potential disciples or followers, approach him. The conversation between these potential followers and Our Lord give us the conditions for following Him. These inquiries by the people occur at an especially crucial point in the Life of Christ. Jesus is going to Jerusalem. He is going not to be praised and enthroned, but rather to be betrayed, mocked, and crucified. He promises His apostles at the Last Supper

The first person says, "I will follow you wherever you go". Jesus replies, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head."

"Anyone who desires to be a follower of Christ cannot expect security or worldly advantages." [20]

The second person is given the invitation by Jesus: "Follow me!" The second person replies, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father."