

# Deacon Tom Coyle's Homily

## Twenty-Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time – September 19, 2021

IN OUR GOSPEL TODAY, AND FOR the next four Sundays, Jesus tells us what it takes to be His disciple.

BUT HE NEVER JUST “TELLS” US, does He? With His every action, Jesus shows us how to live. “Like this,” He demonstrates, “like this.” He keeps showing us how to be more like Him, how to become more like God. In doing so, Jesus reveals to us more and more what God is like: TOTAL SELF-GIVING LOVE!

THE FIRST OF THE THREE requirements for discipleship Jesus gives us today is our willingness to be the last of all. Being the last goes against our very nature; it'll require a genuine death-to-self and a lot of grace to achieve this! We're talking a life-long struggle here, a lifetime commitment.

TODAY, JESUS IS ASKING EACH OF us to let go of our need to be the “best”, of our need to be admired by everyone. He's asking us today to give up being the most important person in my own life.

FOR MANY OF US, THE LOVE WE have for our Family – the care we show for our students, for the sick, for the people in our community – this love and care has helped us to take the first and most difficult step: putting at least one other person before myself.

REMOVING OURSELF FROM THE first position sets us free! Free to put others' needs first and to genuinely care for them.

THIS SETS US WELL ON OUR WAY TO fulfilling Jesus' second requirement for discipleship: that we be the servant of all. He tells us to wash one another's feet as He washed His disciples' feet. Jesus was truly the servant of us all. He healed us; He taught us – “Like this, like this,” - and He was nailed to the cross in our place.

FOR TODAY'S FINAL REQUIREMENT to be His disciple, Jesus places a little child in front of us. Not because the child is cute, not because it's innocent, but because the child is powerless. It can't help us in any way. It can't even repay us for our kindness. And it's perfectly content to be the least of us all.

JESUS IDENTIFIES HIMSELF completely with this child, as He identified Himself all during His life with the poor and the marginalized. Jesus tells us today to put even this helpless child before ourself and to be its servant. “As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me.”

THE MIGHTY GOD ONCE CAME down from His Divine Glory to become a helpless child Himself, willing to be the least of all, the servant of all, so we could become one with Him.

THE NEXT TIME WE KNEEL BEFORE the Baby in the manger, may we hear Him whispering to us, “Like this, like this!”