

## **Thoughts on the cost and commitment of discipleship**

*From the Blog of Michael Haldas*

“Most of us accommodate, don’t we? And most of us excuse our behavior because “that’s not my job.” And most of us turn the other way because “that’s not my responsibility.” And most of us plead common sense, like the priest [in the story of the Good Samaritan]. And there’s a lot of merit to that. But the radicalness of Jesus’ teaching says that we don’t, or should not, live just like other people. It’s a beautiful and costly thing to be a Christian and live a Christian life.” (Fr. John Zeyack)

“Self-denial for the sake of Christ is a mindset in which we strive to respond to His directives, rather than to our own desires. It involves a certain kind of death, both psychic and behavioral. The cost of this self-denial is a constant crucifixion of our desire for earthly gain, esteem, personal profit, independence, and pleasure. Such an attitude runs entirely counter to the self-realization fostered by our contemporary culture.” (Dynamis 9/20/2020)

“God isn’t looking for more members of the parish. God isn’t looking for religious consumers: people who come to church to get something. He’s looking for disciples: those willing to leave important things behind to follow something (Someone) of much greater importance. Discipleship is an orientation – a pattern of life – that involves commitment, action, sacrifice. The Church is a hospital where we’re healed, but St. Paul also refers to the Church as an athletic training ground and battlefield. In the end, one thing matters: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). Love is a commitment, and not an easy one. Love means I put you first. Love entails sacrifice. Love has concrete expressions. Love is never willy-nilly, according to changing feelings and circumstances.” (Fr. Joshua Pappas)

“Thus Scripture counsels, “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it” (Prov. 4:23). Discipleship, we might say, is a way to curate your heart, to be attentive to and intentional about what you love.” (James Smith)

“Let’s face it. If the Kingdom of God is worth anything, it’s worth everything. We are called upon by Christ Himself to lay down everything that would keep us from entering it. That is why Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a treasure hidden in a field. Once we realize the incredible value of that precious piece, we will sell everything we have to obtain it. This divesting of our private holdings is exactly what repentance means. We give up what we must not keep for the incomparable riches of Jesus Christ. This cost to us is the greatest bargain we can ever know.” (Fr. Peter Gillquist)