



## 23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

Wisdom 9:13-18b  
Ps 90:(1) 3-6,12-17  
Philemon 9-10,12-17  
Luke 14:25-33

### Monday September 5

1 Corinthians 5:1-8  
Ps 5:5-7,12  
Luke 6:6-11

### Tuesday September 6

1 Corinthians 6:1-11  
Ps 149:1b-6a, 9b  
Luke 6:12-19

### Wednesday September 7

1 Corinthians 7:25-31  
Ps 45:11-12,14-17  
Luke 6:20-26

### Thursday September 8 Nativity of Virgin Mary

Micah 5:1-4a  
or Romans 8:28-30  
Ps 13:6 (with Isaiah 61:10)  
Matthew 1:1-16,18-23

### Friday September 9 St. Peter Claver

1 Cor 9:16-19,22b-27  
Ps 84:3-6,12  
Luke 6:39-42

### Saturday September 10

1 Corinthians 10:14-22  
Ps 116:12-13,17-18  
Luke 6:43-49

What in your life is a higher priority than your relationship with God? That's what Jesus wants us to look at in this Sunday's Gospel reading. Which people? What work? What trial? What possessions? What friendships? What goals? What activities?

What crosses do you want to get rid of that, if you do escape from them, would require you to abandon Jesus on his cross? (Hint: What sacrifices of love are you unwilling to make?)

Jesus says that unless we are first and foremost committed to discipleship – learning from him and making every effort to become more like him – we are ill prepared for all the other tasks of life.

In other words, we can start building toward good goals, but if our relationship with Christ is not our highest priority, we'll miss his guidance and his surprises and his blessings. We'll get distracted by worldly interferences and sin. We'll become vic-

tims instead of victors in the battles we face. Anything good that we achieve will be less than the best, because there is much more in the kingdom of God than what we can imagine.

A disciple is a student. We learn from Jesus how to love others, even when this becomes a cross to carry. He teaches us how to live a life of joyful love but also of unconditional, forgiving love. And we learn from him how to put up healthy, holy boundaries against those



who interfere with our spiritual growth, and this too can be a cross.

The strength to follow Christ and become more and more like him every day requires a conscious effort to grow stronger in our ability to carry our crosses while uniting ourselves to his cross and to his strength. When we lack this intimate bond with Christ, we stumble and fall, crushed by the weight of our crosses. But if we are willing to make sacrifices out of love for others, like Jesus did, we embrace him more fully and we receive his love more deeply. And this is the most satisfying way to live!

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. Consider your daily activities: What are your top priorities?
2. What do you value more than the time you spend with Jesus in prayer, scripture, and other faith-building activities?
3. What are some common ways that we move God down in priority?
4. By making him our highest priority, what are ways that we can lovingly show concern for others even while putting God ahead of them in our daily activities?