

From the Pastor's Desk

"Hating" So As To Love

Great crowds were traveling with Jesus, and he turned and addressed them, *"If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."* Luke 14:25–26

Why would Jesus exhort the "great crowds" to hate their families? In fact, Jesus went even further than that. He said they must also hate their own lives. If they do not, then they cannot be His disciples. One thing that this shocking teaching did was to shake people out of their lukewarm faith. Sometimes we think of Jesus only as a kind and gentle soul Who always brightens people's days. We see images painted of the smiling Jesus Who always made people feel welcomed and loved. And though these images have truth, it is also true that one way He brightened their days was by challenging them to the core of their being to convert. And that is what Jesus does today in our Gospel.

When we are able to choose the love of God first and foremost in our lives, rejecting the temptations that come through others and even the temptations within our disordered desires, then, and only then, are we in a position to love others and ourselves, in the right way. Jesus obviously wants us to love others and ourselves. But this is only possible when our love is pure and holy and flows from the love of God. Any other form of "love" is not love at all. It is a selfish attachment that hinders our true mission as lovers of God and instruments of that love to others.

Reflect, today, upon the passion that you must have to reject all forms of sin. This includes sin that tempts you through the mediation of your family and friends. It also includes every form of temptation that arises within you on account of your disordered human nature. This holy hatred is an act of love in that it seeks to eliminate everything that keeps you from true love. Choose, today, to be a faithful disciple of Jesus and commit yourself to reject all that seeks to interfere with this choice. Doing so will not only increase your love for God, it will also increase your love for others, and even your love for your own soul.